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ABSTRACT

These four issues contain the following articles: "Corpus Linguistics: Discovering How We Use Language" (John Rosenthal); "Conversation Class: More than 'Just Talking'" (David Kehe and Peggy Kehe); "The Peace Project: A Personal Path to Overcoming Intolerance" (Stephanie Jones-Vo); "Developing the Reading Skills of Adults Learning English" (Miriam Burt and Joy Kreeft Peyton); "Developing Listening Skills with Authentic Materials" (Lindsay Miller); "Bring the Community into the Classroom" (Kathleen Olson); "Malaysia Promotes Excellence in English" (Vinodini Murugesan); "Your Online Companion: ESL Textbook Websites" (Owen Murray and Nevitt Reagan); "Dave Sperling's Guide to the Internet's Best Writing Resources" (Dave Sperling); "Online TESL/TEFL Training" (Thomas Nixon); "Binational Centers: Teaching English and Building Friendships in the Americas" (William Ancker); "Family Literacy and ESL" (David L. Red); "Effective Ways of Building Vocabulary Knowledge" (Paul Nation); "Cryptograms in the EFL/ESL Classroom" (Lee Oakes and Marilyn Rosenthal); and "Creating Congenial Classrooms" (Kirsten Schaetzel). The issues also contain editor's notes, letters to the editor, news briefs, conference calendars, reviews, catalog showcase, and regular columns. (SM)

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ESL Magazine, 2003

Editors
Marilyn Rosenthal
Kathleen R. Beall

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CORPUS LINGUISTICS: Discovering How We Use Language

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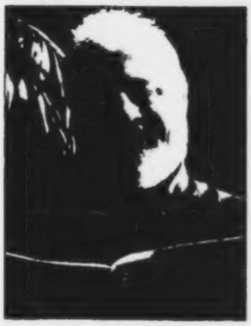

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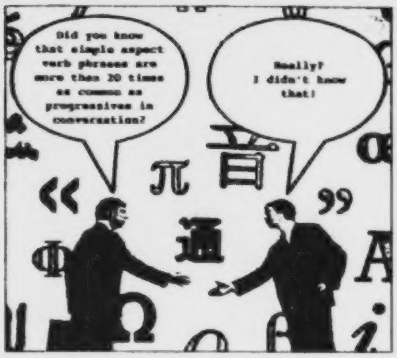
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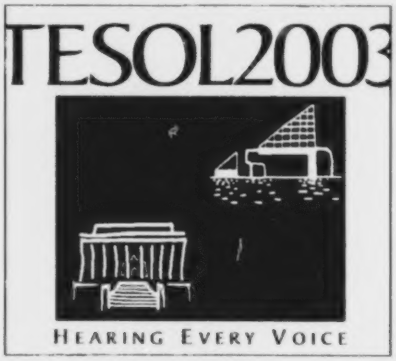

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Getting a New Body

No, I'm not talking about the body one gets by keeping New Year's resolutions to eat less and exercise more. I'm talking about a body of language—corpus linguistics. John Rosenthal writes a very interesting article about this field of study that attempts to describe how languages are really used. He also describes a big project in the works to produce an updated corpus of American English. This will be of great value to teachers, materials writers and others because ESL/EFL students who want to learn American English want "the real thing."

What makes a conversation class successful? Students talking? Of course, that's part of it, but David and Peggy Kehe explain how to teach conversation strategies that will make conversation class more valuable for students.

World peace. It seems like this is on everyone's mind these days. But what about peace closer to home, in the school or program where you teach? The ESL students at Urbandale High School in Illinois designed a program to promote peace in their school. Stephaney Jones-Vo describes their "Peace Project" and how it is transforming the relationships between newcomer students and their native born classmates.

All the best!

Marilyn Rosenthal

Marilyn Rosenthal, Ph.D.
Editorial Director

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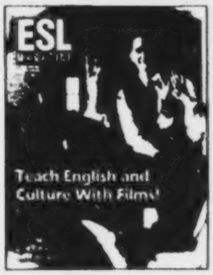
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Write Us! *Send letters to eslmagazine@cs.com or ESL Magazine, 220 McKendree Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401. Include your name and position or address.*

Language Evolution

▶ Your Grammar Guy, Richard Firsten, is terrific. I always turn to his column first. Richard's insights into complex grammar issues are fun to read as well as practical for teachers. He demystifies grammar in his down-to-earth approach and gives practical advice about dealing with those sticky grammar questions that all of us run into in the classroom. His recent article "Evolution: It's Not Just For Biology" was equally informative and fun to read. All of us can learn from his common-sense perspectives on areas of English usage that are still changing. Twenty years ago, when I said in the first grammar text I wrote that *can* is sometimes used to request permission (e.g., Can I call you later?), I got letters from several people expressing deep-seated umbrage, including my own 9th grade English teacher! I felt then, as I do now and as Richard does, that it is important that we describe for our students how English is actually used, and as Richard further suggests, make distinctions in usage levels for them.

—BETTY AZAR
via email

▶ Thank you for Richard Firsten's article in the Nov/Dec issue. I also notice, sometimes with a twinge of pain, when something previously seen as an error gains common usage. He left out possessive "s" used as a plural, as in "All DVD's on sale today" and "alot" used for much or many. I've been a bilingual/ESL teacher for 22 years and have seen many of the changes he writes about (aka: about which he writes). More than that, my mother was an English teacher in the early 50s (no apostrophe!). I can still hear her retorting, "Sitting on the A drinking the Tea" to a question about where something was *at*, which, by the way, is a very common form here in the Pacific Northwest. The only thing constant is change!

—DAVID IRWIN
Vancouver, WA

▶ I thoroughly enjoyed Richard Firsten's article "Evolution: It's Not Just For Biology"! I "chimed in" with the examples illustrating how English is evolving. I have noticed and have been occasionally annoyed by these changes. I conducted research regarding "there is" vs. "there are." The majority of the people I observed used the singular structure "there is" with plural nouns, including 60% of NS speech samples (myself included)—and many were even observed in academic settings! I was shocked at first but then realized that perhaps English is moving towards one form to express both meanings. Teachers need to overcome the initial "shock," admit that native speakers use forms that are "incorrect," and raise our students' awareness on how to deal with this discrepancy. We must empower our students to make language choices regarding style, register and context.

—ADRIANNE OCHOA
Atlanta, GA

Creating Placement Tests

▶ I read your very informative article on testing ["Creating Placement Tests" by Joel Murray, Nov./Dec. 2002]. In conjunction with the programmers at Blackstone.ca, I am using the ViaMedia software to create an accent test online, which should be up and running soon. We have a series of 12 tests in the Accent Exam, and the issues of validity, weighting and scoring are especially important to us as we develop the tests.

—ANN COOK
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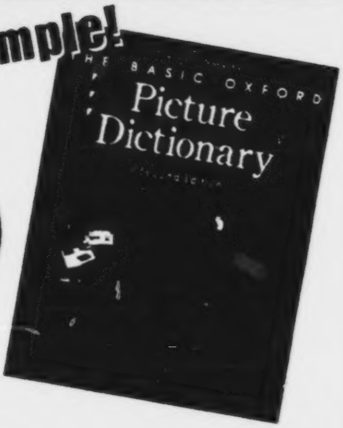

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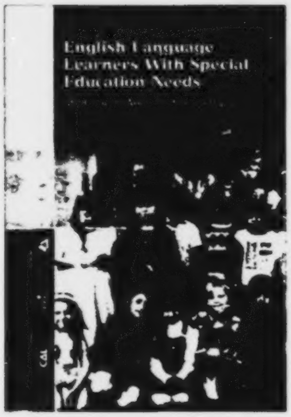
The solution involves a continuum of well-coordinated services: identification of English language learners with special needs, assessment of their abilities, placement in appropriate programs and classes, and instruction that helps them learn English and school content.

This book describes model programs and approaches that include early intervention strategies, assessment methods, parent/school collaboration, and native and dual language instruction.

For online information about this series and the other books in it, please visit



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New Education Survey Focuses on "Teacher Gap"

In January, *Education Week* released "Quality Counts 2003," an education report based on surveys of the 50 states and the District of Columbia and 30 large school districts and analysis of data from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey, a federal database. The report focuses on the "teacher gap," the shortage of qualified teachers in the schools that need them most. It suggests that closing the "teacher gap" is necessary for closing the "achievement gap" between minority students and nonminority students, between poor and rich students. The report reviews various efforts by states to recruit and retain higher numbers of qualified teachers but maintains that these efforts don't direct the "high quality" teachers to the high-poverty, high minority and low-performing schools. The following statistics are among the findings:

▶ 22% of secondary students take at least one class with a teacher who doesn't have even a minor in the class subject. In high-poverty schools, it's 32%.

▶ 13% of secondary students in low-poverty schools have a teacher who is not certified in the subject taught. In high-poverty schools, it's 26%.

Also included are state-by-state data on one hundred quality indicators for each state's public school system. Each state also received a report card summarizing these data in these categories: student achievement by race, standards and accountability, improving teacher quality, school climate, and the adequacy and equity of resources.

NCLB Accountability Plans Submitted

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have submitted their state educational accountability plans for review on time under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. The plans, which detail how and under what timeline states plan to achieve full proficiency toward state academic content standards, were due to the U.S. Department of Education on January 31, 2003. The plans also must address how states intend to close persistent achievement gaps between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers.

No Child
LEFT BEHIND

Five states—Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Massachusetts and New York—volunteered for early review of their plans and received approval by early January. Most states have met with Education Department leaders to discuss development of their state plans. The next steps include review of the applications, technical assistance and a peer review of the state plan. The non-federal peer reviewers include state policymakers, national education reform experts, statisticians, and others who are familiar with educational standards, assessments, accountability, the needs of underperforming schools and other educational needs of students.

The five approved state plans are available on the U.S. Department of Education's website at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/csas/index.html.

International Students Vital to U.S. National Interests

In its report released in January, the Strategic Task Force on International Student Access identifies major barriers encountered by prospective international students attempting to access U.S. higher education. This task force was established by NAFSA: Association of International Educators to examine the issue of international student access to higher education in the United States.

The report, "In America's Interest: Welcoming International Students," outlines a plan to overcome these barriers, a plan that calls for a national policy that articulates the importance of international students to the interests of the United States.

Recognizing that U.S. security requirements have changed since September 11, 2001, the report describes the need to sustain and bolster the long-standing belief that the United States benefits from international educational exchange, which fosters mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation with other nations, and that educating the world's future leaders is an indispensable investment in America's global leadership.

The task force has identified four barriers to access:

1) Absence of a coordinated international student recruitment strategy;

2) Unnecessarily burdensome U.S. government regulations;

3) The cost of U.S. higher education;

4) The complexity of U.S. higher education.

Among the task force's recommendations:

▶ A recruitment strategy that mandates and coordinates the actions of the Departments of State, Commerce, and Education, which share responsibility for international student recruitment.

In America's Interest:

NAFSA

▶ Updated immigration laws and a visa screening process that permits necessary scrutiny of visa applicants and decisions within reasonable and predictable periods of time, and a student monitoring system that serves its intended purpose without damaging student exchange or imposing severe penalties for inadvertent errors.

▶ Partnerships among government, higher education, foreign governments and businesses that increase financial aid opportunities for international students and provide better mechanisms for accessing information about them.

▶ A marketing plan with clear, consistent information about U.S. higher education that includes a user-friendly, comprehensive web-based resource.

For an executive summary and the full report, go to http://www.nafsa.org/content/PublicPolicy/stf/inamericasinterest.htm.

NEWS BRIEFS

Research Grants Available from TIRF

The TESOL International Research Foundation (TIRF) invites proposals for Doctoral Dissertation Grants (up to U.S. $5,000) and Priority Research Grants (up to U.S. $25,000). Proposals are solicited for research directly related to the relationship between teachers' proficiency in English, effectiveness in teaching English as a second or foreign language or as a medium of instruction, and student achievement. The deadline for receipt of complete proposals is May 31, 2003. For more information and complete instructions, visit the TIRF website at http://www.tirfonline.org/ and click on "Call for Research Proposals 2003-2004."

Conference Calendar

January

- 6-10 **Hawaii International Conference on Education**. Honolulu, HI. Contact 808-947-7187.
- 22-24 **Costa Rica TESOL**. San Joce, Costa Rica. Contact Elieth Matamoros, elieth_m@hotmail.com.
- 23-25 **Thailand TESOL**. Bangkok, Thailand. Contact Suchada Nimmannit, nsuchada@chula.ac.th.

February

- 15-17 **Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics, GURT 2003**. Washington, DC. Contact Andrea Tyler, 202-687-5755.
- 22 **NYS-TESOL**. Long Island City, NY. Contact Joanne Grumet, jgrumet@lagcc.cuny.edu.
- 27-1 **XVII Foro de Expertos Universitarios en Lenguas Extranjeras**. Toluca, Mexico. Website: http://www.uaemex.mx/feule2003.
- 28-1 **Illinois TESOL**. Chicago, IL. Contact 846-692-8287.
- 28-1 **Ethnography in Education Research Forum**. Philadelphia, PA. Contact 215-898-3273.

March

- 5-8 **Glendale, Litchfield and Washington Elementary School Districts Conference**. Scottsdale, AZ. Contact Maria Lohrasb, 1-800-531-0082.
- 6-8 **Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**. Minneapolis, MN. Contact Diane Ging, 614-529-0109.
- 12-14 **TESOL Arabia**. Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Contact Kathy Bird, kathy_bird@zu.ac.ae.
- 13-14 **University of Seville conference on applied linguistics (ELIA)**. University of Seville, Spain. Contact elia@siff.us.es.
- 22-25 **American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL)**. Arlington, VA. Contact Jim Yoshioka, 808-956-9424.
- 22-25 **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). Third TESOL Graduate Student Forum.** Baltimore, MD. http://www.tesol.org/mbr/community/students/gsf1.html.
- 25-29 **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)**. Baltimore, MD. Contact 703-836-0774.

April

- 4-6 **TESOL Spain**. Valencia, Spain. Contact dwestall@idm.upv.es
- 10-12 **Arizona TESOL**. Mesa, AZ. Website: http://www.az-tesol.org/2003-conference/menu.htm.
- 10-13 **CATESOL**. Pasadena, CA. Contact Eleanor Black, 323-343-4330.
- 17-18 **Isik University International ELT Conference**. Istanbul, Turkey. Website: http://www.eltc2003.isikun.edu.tr.
- 22-26 **IATEFL Conference**. Brighton, United Kingdom. Website: http://www.iatefl.org.
- 25 **Arkansas TESOL**. Arkadelphia, AR. Contact Sharon Nichols, 501-450-4870.
- 25-26 **Tennessee TESOL**. Franklin, TN. Contact Kim Llorens. 615-790-0892.
- 25-26 **National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education Conference**. Portland, OR. Contact Al Wright, 225-664-8637.

May

- 3 **PennTESOL East**. Philadelphia, PA. Website: http://penntesol.org.
- 27-29 **Damascus University International TEFL Conference**. Damascus, Syria. Contact Waddah Al-Khatib, +963-11-212-0321.
- 28-29 **TESOL Ukraine**. Sevastopol, Ukraine. Contact Svitlana Gladio, tesol_ua@tesol.org.

June

- 7 **Kentucky TESOL**. Cincinatti, OH. Contact Anita Lewis, 513-674-4244.
- 26-28 **Korea Association of Teachers of English**. Daejeon, South Korea. Contact Dr. Lee, Hwa-ja, Lhj@sunchon.ac.kr.
- 27-29 **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) 2003 TESOL Academy**. Washington, DC. Contact 703-836-0774.

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NETWORTHY

Teaching Culture in the ESL/EFL Classroom

Most foreign language teachers would agree that they should teach culture in addition to language. But what does culture mean? Samovar and Porter define it as "the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving." No wonder teachers are often baffled when asked to define culture—it encompasses all aspects of life! To get more of a handle on this broad concept, educators commonly distinguish between "high culture" (or capital C culture) and "low culture" (or small C culture). High culture includes the fine arts (e.g., music, literature, painting) and low culture includes aspects of daily life such as food and clothing.

The Web offers an abundance of materials to help language teachers address culture in their classes. Numerous online articles define culture and discuss why and how to teach it, and many authentic online cultural materials are available for classroom use.

Online Articles

"Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom" by Meena Singhal, University of Arizona. ThaiTESOL Bulletin, Vol. 11, No. 1, February 1998 (http://www.thaitesol.org/bulletin/1101/110102.html). Singhal provides a brief history of culture teaching and defines a cultural syllabus. She discusses culture teaching in the classroom, the World Wide Web in culture teaching, and the importance of comparative culture teaching.

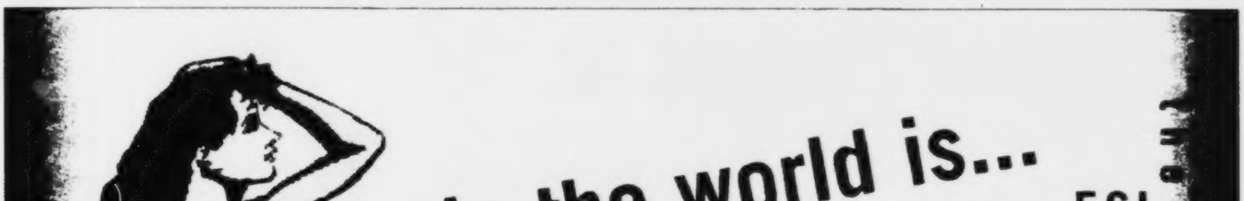
"Teaching Culture in Literature in the ESL/EFL Classroom" by Anna Franca Plastina. TESOL Italy (http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Plastina-CultureinLiterature/). This paper appears in the Internet TESL Journal and was presented at a British Council National Conference held in Palermo, Italy, in March 1999. It is the design for an in-service training plan for ESL/EFL teachers to demonstrate the importance of teaching culture in literature.

Authentic Materials

The ESL/EFL teacher must decide which culture to teach: U.S.? Canadian? British? Australian? Which aspects of culture? She can then find authentic materials on the Web to use in class. I teach international students in Washington, DC, and have made use of the resources listed below. Online materials can be found for almost every city and country in the world!

- ▶ Art: All of the art museums in Washington, DC, have websites. The National Gallery of Art—www.nga.gov/
- ▶ Government: White House—www.whitehouse.gov
- ▶ Entertainment: Wolf Trap, an open-air theater in suburban Washington, DC—www.wolf-trap.org/
- ▶ The Press: The Washington Post—www.washingtonpost.com

Christine Meloni is associate professor of EFL at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. She can be reached at meloni@gwu.edu. Please write "Networthy" in the subject line of e-mail messages. All Networthy columns can be found online at http://www.eslmag.com/articles.html.



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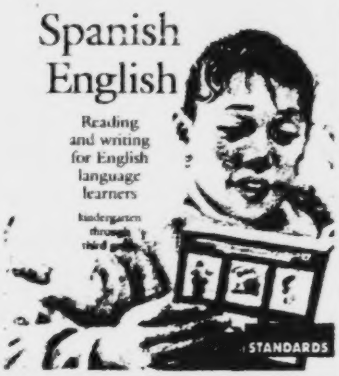
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CORPUS LINGUISTICS: Discovering How We Use Language

BY JOHN ROSENTHAL

How do you know what to teach your ESL/EFL students? What are the most important words to add to their vocabularies? What verb tenses should you emphasize in class? These and similar questions can be answered through *corpus linguistics*, the hot topic in language circles these days. For those with rusty Latin, corpus linguistics literally means "a body of language." More specifically, corpus linguistics is the study of language through the use of a large collection of naturally occurring written and spoken texts. Corpus linguists collect thousands of examples of written and spoken language and then break down these examples word by word so that they can get a better understanding of how the language is used.

The idea of a corpus is not new. Samuel Johnson used a corpus of English texts in 1755 to compile examples of authentic uses of words for his dictionary. Similarly, in the 1800s, volunteers working on the *Oxford English Dictionary* read through hundreds of texts, looking for examples of their assigned words, which they submitted to the publishers on slips of paper. Since then, linguists around the world have used various corpora in their efforts to document hundreds of languages.

Corpora With Computers

What is new is the computer, which permits much more expansive and detailed investigation into language usage. Whereas the field of corpus linguistics might once have been likened to a bicycle, today it's more comparable to a motorcycle.

"Actually, it wasn't even a bicycle before the computer," says Susan Conrad, co-author of *Corpus Linguistics, Investigating Language Structure and Use* and professor of applied linguistics at Portland State University. "It was more like walking. It was just too time-consuming to analyze a large body of data by hand. The computer allows us to look at a large body of data and analyze language patterns."

More importantly, computers don't get tired. That means that unlike the human volunteers for the *Oxford English Dictionary*, computers can keep track of dozens of definitions or unique attributes of thousands of different words. "We might be able to keep track of a few things," says Randi Reppen, professor of English in the MA/TESL and Applied Linguistics Program at Northern Arizona University. "But there's no way humans can keep track of multiple things across millions of words."

Furthermore, because computers are meticulous and exhaustive, they record every instance of a word, not just the ones that stand out. "Our intuitions about language use are quite off," says Reppen. Normal usage of many words "passes at a subconscious level, while the unusual is what catches our attention." If a word appears hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands of times in a corpus, it is impossible for a human reader to count and categorize all the contexts in which it appears. As a result, dictionaries, vocabulary lists and structure guides that are still in use today may suffer from a disproportionate attention to types of usage that simply aren't that common.

Did you know that simple aspect verb phrases are more than 20 times as common as progressives in conversation?
Really? I didn't know that!

Finally, computers also make it possible to expand corpora to millions of words. As any statistician will tell you, the larger the data sample, the more accurate conclusions can be (if the data are balanced and representative, of course). Computers can also be programmed to act as something of a verbal spreadsheet. In more advanced corpora, programmers tag words by their parts of speech, the age and/or gender of their author, and the context in which the words occur. Then researchers can use that information to discern differences among these various kinds of speech.

An Updated American Corpus

One of the byproducts of the surge in interest in corpus and computational linguistics is the creation of the American National Corpus, a massive undertaking sponsored by a consortium of publishers, software companies and academics including Pearson, Random House, Microsoft, Sony, Vassar College, Northern Arizona University, and the Universities of California, Colorado and Pennsylvania, among many others. The American National Corpus is not the first corpus of American English—there are already hundreds of different kinds of corpora in the United States, and thousands more around the world—but it will be the most comprehensive corpus available to researchers.

The American National Corpus will also be the most representative corpus of American English available to date. Most of the existing corpora are limited to some segment of the language, for example, business English, academic English, professional English or conversational English. The American National Corpus, by contrast, will incorporate English from more than 16,000 contemporary written and spoken texts—everything from academic textbooks, magazines and popular newspapers to everyday conversations that have been recorded and transcribed by researchers. And unlike most other corpora, it will provide a proportional balance of these different registers. As a result, the American National Corpus will not only allow students and teachers to compare language use across registers, but it will also provide a definitive portrait of how the English language is used in the United States today.

The Corpus will also shed light on "across the pond" comparisons between American English and the Queen's English, which was codified in a 1994 corpus of British English. "The Europeans have been doing this for a long time," says Reppen, who is also the project manager for the American National Corpus. The Scandinavian countries in particular have been leaders in developing corpora. According to Conrad, "there were a lot of people who wanted to learn English, but there were very few native speakers." So they had to create corpora from English texts to provide examples of how the language was used.

By contrast, up until 10 years ago, computational linguists in the United States were trying to describe language with rules, rather than studying the raw language to determine whether the rules were right, says Nancy Ide, chair of the Computer Science Department at Vassar College, and the technical director for the American National Corpus. "The problem with the rule-based approach is having a precise enough description when the rules change over time—it takes years to actually describe all the characteristics so that a computer can know what humans know."

The transition to a statistics-based approach was slow to come to the United States, but the delay has allowed corpus linguistics to benefit immensely from improvements in technology. For example, in the past, if you wanted to include spoken language in a corpus, you audiotaped conversations and transcribed them. But today, it is possible to videotape conversations so that the transcribers can not only hear the context in which the conversations occurred, but also see face and hand gestures that may provide additional context for these dialogues.

It is also now possible to amass thousands of hours of conversations for inclusion in a corpus entirely by telephone. I recently participated in a study in which a computer arranged for me to have 10-minute phone conversations with complete strangers on a variety of current subjects. The conversations were recorded and transcribed and will be included in some future corpus as examples of conversational English.

Applications of Corpus Linguistics

The most obvious application for corpus linguistics is the creation of dictionaries and vocabulary lists. Because it is based on actual language use rather than intuition or rules of grammar, corpus linguistics provides an empirical answer to questions such as "What are the most frequently used words in the language?" and "How common are the various definitions of words with more than one meaning?"

Because those questions are of interest to dictionary publishers, the major dictionary publishers have, over the past few years, started using their own private corpora as the basis for their dictionaries. But only now are other kinds of classroom materials beginning to be corpus-based as well. And as more corpora are developed, they are shedding light on pedagogy.

For example, in their article "What Does Frequency Have to Do With Grammar Teaching," Reppen and Douglas Biber, also a professor in the Applied Linguistics Program in the Department of English at Northern Arizona University, suggest that the progressive aspect is widely believed to be the "unmarked choice in conversation." They point to several ESL grammar books in which the progressive is regarded as a cornerstone of English grammar, including four in which the progressive is introduced as early as the first chapter, and three in which the progressive is taught even before the simple present.

But according to the 20-million word corpus that is the basis for the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999), "simple aspect verb phrases are more than 20 times as common as progressives in conversation." So when teachers complain that their students overuse the progressive, it's not because the students fail to understand their textbooks, but because their textbooks put a grossly disproportionate emphasis on how commonly the progressive occurs.

In another example, Biber and Reppen take on the conventional wisdom that participial adjectives (such as *bored* or *exciting*) are more common than adjectival nouns as modifiers of nouns. Of the six ESL/EFL grammar texts they surveyed, four explained the role of participial adjectives, while only one mentioned the adjectival role of nouns (e.g., *dog house* or *movie theater*).

But the corpus paints another picture. As one might expect, it demonstrates that plain old adjectives are the most common modifiers of nouns, especially in spoken conversation. What's surprising is that adjectival nouns are much more common than participial adjectives, which are extremely rare. And in newspaper writing, adjectival nouns modify nouns almost as frequently as adjectives do.

Although the American National Corpus won't be completed for at least three more years, existing corpora are already transforming the learning process. ESL and first-language students at Northern Arizona University and Portland State University are currently using a student version of the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. "One of the things my students got most excited about was frequency information for structures they know are difficult, such as verbs plus infinitives," says Conrad. "There are so many verbs, but it makes it easier if you can narrow it down to the ones that occur most commonly with infinitives." She said the corpus identified *want*, *try*, *seem*, and *like* as the verbs that occurred most frequently with infinitives in conversation.

An additional benefit of corpora is that students can do their own research by accessing the raw data. For example, if students in Conrad's classes at Portland State want to know whether to use *big* or *large*, they can go to the computer lab and get frequency data that show not only how often each word occurs, but the contexts in which each is most commonly used. In Conrad's experience, this tool is particularly useful for teachers who are not native speakers of English and, therefore, may not have the intuition that native speakers have about when to use each choice. (However, since frequency data have shown that such intuition may not be as accurate as we once thought, native speakers might wish to double-check their perceptions, as well.)

Teachers who have a corpus that tracks language across registers could ask students to compare the use of the word *like* in different kinds of speech. Accessing the corpus data, they could find uses of *like* in casual conversation that do not appear anywhere in fiction or nonfiction writing. Exercises such as these, says Conrad, get students using the language as they talk to each other about language.

Perhaps most importantly, as students and teachers become more accustomed to using frequency data to inform their conclusions about language use, Reppen says "people will be more receptive to corpora and won't be so scared of them."

Corpus Linguistics Needs You

The University of Pennsylvania's Linguistic Data Consortium is conducting a telephone speech study to support linguistic research and technology development, and you can help. Simply agree to talk on the phone for ten minutes with other participants—typically people you do not know. A robot operator initiates the calls. You just answer the phone and talk about the topic of the day. To participate, call 1-800-380-PENN or go to www.ldc.upenn.edu. Each time you complete a conversation, you'll get $10 plus a chance to win one of three $1,000-lottery prizes. More importantly, you'll be helping linguists learn exactly how people talk.

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TESOL2003

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The Fairs

In each of the four fairs, approximately 9-12 presentations occur simultaneously at computers throughout the room. Participants circulate, visiting various demonstrations, choosing from among many presentations in a one-hour period.

- **The Internet Fair**—demonstrations by teachers or teacher-developers who have used Internet-based programs, websites, or activities with students. Demonstrations may highlight student projects, activities or curriculum created for students or educators.
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EV Mini-workshops

EV Mini-workshops are limited seating, hands-on workshops where participants gain experience in adapting standard software for CALL purposes. Participants will have the opportunity to create a product or gain depth in software use.

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The EV Online

The EV Online provides access to the conference for those unable to attend. Online sessions include readings, discussions, chats, guest speakers and task-based activities. You do not have to be a member of TESOL, nor do you have to register for TESOL 2003 to take part in these free events.

For more information, stop by the EV and ask a friendly volunteer or visit one of these websites—TESOL CALL-IS: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~call/ev2003/ or the TESOL 2003 Schedule of Events: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~call/ev2003/2003 schedule.html.

Greg Kessler teaches in the Ohio Program of Intensive English (OPIE) at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He manages OPIE's use of a self-access computer lab and develops distance programs. He is currently chair-elect of TESOL's CALL Interest Section.

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CONVERSATION CLASS: *More than "Just Talking"*

BY DAVID AND PEGGY KEHE

It's easy to think that a conversation class is successful if students are kept busy talking. With this in mind, teachers may find themselves in a continual search for the types of topics that their students will have an intrinsic interest in discussing. However, while keeping students talking is a worthwhile aim, it may not constitute what should be the top priority. Talking alone may not suffice to prepare students for speaking situations beyond the classroom, where they will be expected to interact on a wide variety of topics, some interesting, some mundane and some about which they have little prior knowledge.

It is possible to design speaking activities that help students hone their skills so that these challenges are addressed more directly. Moreover, students gain the maximum benefit from these activities when they are given appropriate feedback. In fact, giving feedback can make the difference between teaching a class with a lackadaisical attitude and a class that is focused and on task. The following two speaking activities aim to meet students' specific conversational needs, and the sample feedback form and suggestions on how to implement it will increase the effectiveness of the activities.

The Purpose of a Conversation Activity

In keeping with the communicative trend of the times, we began to use pair and group activities in our conversation courses in the 1970s. Observing our students interact, we began to notice that there tended to be one or two exceptional students in any typical class. These students were always actively involved, regardless of what the topic was or who their partners were; this would often be in contrast to others in the class who would skim the surface of activities and finish quickly. Closer examination of the stellar students revealed that they were not extending their discussions by monologuing. Rather, they were listening intently to what others had to say and were asking follow-up questions.

Asking follow-up questions soon became a strategy that we recommended to the whole class as a way to reach a deeper and more meaningful level in their interactions. Students began incorporating these questions into their discussions, and it did add depth and breadth to what they had to say.

Further analysis of what the "good" students were doing resulted in a list of conversation strategies that eventually included asking for clarification (Did you say...?), using comprehension checks (Do you understand?), soliciting information (What do you mean?) and giving understanding responses (I see.).

After that, seldom did we introduce a speaking activity that did not include an explanation of what strategies students could incorporate while doing it. This shift in emphasis—from just discussing topics to practicing strategies—meant that the activities themselves needed to be restructured.

Structuring Activities to Promote Specific Strategies

In his study of conversation strategies, Dornyei (1995, 55) presented empirical evidence that students can learn strategies "through focused instruction." If instruction is focused, then students are working with a strategy rather than merely listening to the teacher explain it. Focused practice in conversation strategies can be done either indirectly or directly. First, let's look at how focused practice can be incorporated indirectly into an information gap activity. Then, a direct focused practice will be introduced in an activity that has a more free-style discussion format.

An Indirect Way to Practice Conversation Strategies

One popular information-gap activity involves using maps with missing information. In a typical arrangement, half the class (the Student As) have maps of a town with some locations labeled and others left blank, and the other half of the class (the Student Bs) has the same maps but with the opposite information provided. Without looking at their partners' maps, students talk to each other to fill in what is missing.

Students, however, can miss the main point of activities like this. Not surprisingly, they may assume that the primary aim is to practice giving directions. While this is a goal, it is not the main one because they will rarely have to explain directions in English in real life. However, they will regularly need to use strategies to clarify, negotiate for meaning and repair breakdowns in communication, in the same ways that native speakers do. Thus, the primary aim of activities like this is, in fact, to provide opportunities to practice strategies of clarification and negotiation, although the students might not be readily aware of it.

When students misconstrue the purpose of activities like these, they risk missing opportunities to use the strategies that the activities were designed to focus on. At such times, students are apt to resort either to using another language or glancing at their partners' papers.

To help ensure that students grasp the primary purpose of a lesson, a teacher can carry out the following two "pre-steps." The first pre-step is to determine which specific strategies would be useful in order for students to complete the activity entirely in English. For example, with the map activity, they could fairly easily incorporate the following three: asking for a repeat ("Could you say that again?"), echoing ("You said to the north, right?"), and clarification requests ("Which street is it on?").

The second pre-step is for the teacher to write a "pre-activity" dialogue to demonstrate how the students will be able to use the strategies in their own pair or group work. The dialogue takes place between imaginary students who are doing the same type of speaking activity as the students in the class will subsequently do. For maps, thus, it is a dialogue between two hypothetical students who are in the process of doing a map activity and who use the three strategies mentioned above to complete it. So that students will focus on the strategies incorporated into the dialogue, blanks are left where key phrases are to be filled in. Students read the dialogue silently and fill in the blanks with the phrases, which appear in random order above the dialogue. See the example of a pre-activity exercise for the map activity at right.

This pre-activity exercise can help clarify for students that the challenge is not merely to fill in a map, but rather to communicate in English by using strategies to clarify meaning and clear up misunderstandings. The fill-in-the-blank format gives students a reason to be actively involved with the content, and it gives them the chance to focus on the strategies to a greater degree than had they been asked to merely read it.

An Indirect vs. A Direct Way to Practice Strategies

Information-gap activities are like puzzles that partners solve by sharing and comparing information; these provide an ideal way for students to practice strategies indirectly. However, the lack of an explicit focus on the strategies themselves means that students could conceivably carry out these activities without using any of the strategies that they may have been designed to focus on. On the other hand, a direct type of practice would set up situations in which students cannot avoid using strategies. In this type, partners follow separate instructions on their respective papers in order to carry out specific roles in a conversation.

A Direct Way to Practice Strategies

Direct activities can be designed to focus on a specific strategy. For example, in the activity at right entitled "Soliciting Details," students practice the strategy of asking for details by using such expressions as "What do you mean?," "Can you give me an example?," "I'd be interested to know..." or "Could you explain...?"

As was the case with the map activity earlier, a pre-activity dialogue is useful in giving students the chance to work with the strategies that they themselves will subsequently use in their pair/group work. See the example of a pre-activity dialogue for "Soliciting Details" at right.

After filling in the pre-activity dialogue as a written exercise, the students would do the Soliciting Details Speaking Activity on page 18. It includes four steps and is arranged in a Student A/Student B format. In the first step, Student A reads and completes general statements. Student B solicits details using phrases provided. For example, using the cards illustrated on page 18, Student A reads her first sentence to Student B and verbally fills in the blank with the type of work she would like to do. Student B listens and then reads his part, verbally filling in the unfinished portion of his statement.

After Student A reads her first item (by saying, for example, "In the future, I'd like to work as a journalist."), Student B would probably respond with, "You said that you'd like to work as a journalist. Could you explain why?" Student A would then give a free-style answer (e.g., "I love writing and traveling. Journalists are able to do both of these."), which might prompt Student B to make a comment or solicit more details by asking another question (e.g., "Would you like to write about politics, sports or what?") All students could be encouraged to extend their discussion of the first item until it had reached a natural end, at which point they would go on to Student A's next general statement.

In Step 2, the roles reverse, with Student B reading the statements and Student A asking the questions to solicit details. See an example of Step 2 on page 18. As can be seen in Steps 1 and 2, the questions for soliciting details are provided and students are virtually obliged to use them.

Step 3 of the Soliciting Details Speaking Activity is less structured. The initiating statements are still provided, but the soliciting questions are not. Students must decide for themselves which expressions to use to solicit details in response to each of their partner's statements. In Step 4, the roles are

"Maps" Pre-activity Dialogue

(indirect practice of strategies)

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the words or phrases in bold type:

"you repeat that"
"on the west side, right?"
"Did you"
"Which avenue?"

1. A: We'll start by finding the coffee shop.
2. B: (clarification request) __________ say the coffee shop?
3. A: That's right. Do you see Kennedy Street on the west side?
4. B: (echo) You said __________
5. A: Yes, on the west side. Also, can you see Sunshine Avenue?
6. B: (clarification request) ______________________?
7. A: Sunshine Avenue.
8. B: Yes, I see it.
9. A: OK. Where Kennedy and Sunshine meet is the coffee shop. Next, we'll find the bakery.
10. B: (ask for a repeat) I'm sorry. Could __________________?

"Soliciting Details" Pre-activity Dialogue

(direct practice of strategy)

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the words or phrases in bold type:

"What do you"
"You said"
"I'd like to know"
"happened"

1. A: My brother got a speeding ticket.
2. B: (soliciting details) Really? What ______________?
3. A: Well, he was late for work and was driving fast.
4. B: (soliciting details) ______________ mean by "fast"?
5. A: About double the speed limit.
6. B: (soliciting details) __________ "double the speed limit." __________ __________ what the limit was.
7. A: Thirty miles per hour.

reversed. See Steps 3 and 4 on page 18.

By the end of this activity, students should have made progress toward internalizing the strategy of asking questions in order to solicit details, and it is hoped that they will make use of these types of questions in future speaking situations.

Giving Students Feedback

For helping students incorporate conversation strategies, it can be effective to provide them with feedback on how they are interacting. In order to gather the data needed for this, while students are working in pairs or groups, the teacher notes on paper which students are using strategies as they interact. After several classes, each student is given a completed conversation evaluation form like the example below, at right.

This type of feedback is particularly effective if given both early in a term and at regular intervals thereafter. Teachers who may not feel entirely certain of their evaluation of every point for every student can still give students their perception of how each of them is interacting. Doing this is not as daunting as it may seem, as it is a matter of focusing merely on students' participation, rather than on their grammar or the depth of their ideas.

Previous articles in *ESL Magazine* (Englander 2000, Olsen 2002) have discussed the importance of conversation strategies both inside and outside the classroom. Students are more apt to use them and understand their value if they are given focused practice. And providing students with specific feedback on how they are interacting is a way for teachers to recognize their students' strengths and/or make them aware of areas where they still need improvement. If the purpose of a conversation course is to learn specific ways to explain ideas and understand others, rather than just to talk, then students' time and efforts can be maximized, and teachers can shift their energies so that designing activities with a specific focus takes on a higher priority than searching for ideal topics.

David and Peggy Kehe are instructors at Whatcom Community College. They are co-authors of Discussion Strategies, *the award-winning* Conversation Strategies, *and the soon-to-be-published* Writing Strategies.

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"Soliciting Details" Speaking Activity Cards

Step 1

Student A	Student B
Say these sentences to Student B and answer B's questions.	Listen to Student A's statements. Then decide how to complete the questions and ask them in order to get more details.
1. In the future, I'd like to work as a __________. (fill in)	1. You said that you'd like to work as a ______. Could you explain why?
2. When I was younger, I was very [bad/good].	2. Can you give me an example...?

Step 2

Student A	Student B
Listen to Student B's statements. Then decide how to complete the questions and ask them in order to get more details.	Say these sentences to Student A and answer A's questions.
3. Could you tell me...	3. My favorite holiday is _________. (fill in).
4. What do you mean...	4. I want to have several children someday.

Step 3

Student A	Student B
Fill in the blanks and read these sentences to Student B. Also, answer Student B's questions	Listen to Student A's statements. Then ask several questions in order to get more details. Use expressions to solicit details.
5. I think pets are _________.	5. (student chooses expression)
6. _________ is my favorite _________.	6. (student chooses expression)

Step 4

Student A	Student B
Listen to Student B's statements. Then ask several questions in order to get more details. Use expressions to solicit details.	Fill in the blanks and read these sentences to Student A. Also, answer Student A's questions
7. (student chooses expression)	7. ______ makes me angry.
8. (student chooses expression)	8. I prefer to spend time [alone/with people].

Conversation Evaluation Form

Name_______________________________ Date___________

Strong Points

___ You make a good effort to use only English.
___ You ask questions to get more details.
___ You use rejoinders or nod your head to show that you understand.
___ You explain your ideas with details.
___ You volunteer to talk in groups.
___ You make a good effort to speak, even when the topic is difficult.

How You Can Improve

___ Try to use only English.
___ Try to ask questions to get more details.
___ Try to use rejoinders or nod your head to show that you understand.
___ Try to explain your ideas with more details.
___ Try to volunteer more to talk.
___ Try to give your partner(s) more chances to talk.

Grade ________

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The Grammar Guy

Getting Oriented on Idiolects!

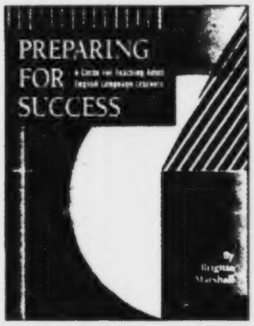
Dear Richard: I enjoyed the article "Evolution: It's Not Just For Biology." I often ponder English words that are frequently used incorrectly—*February*: often pronounced "Febuary," leaving out the "r." *Orient(ed)*: often pronounced "orientate" or "orientated." *Nuclear*: often pronounced "nucular." *In regard to*: often said or written as "In regards to." There are many examples, but [these] have been bothering me for a long time. What do you think? Thank you. *—Philip N. Carson, Davis, CA*

Dear Philip: Thanks for letting me know that you enjoyed my article. Now I'll respond to your observations. *February*: The pronunciation you've cited as incorrect is actually the secondary pronunciation. In the primary pronunciation, the "r" is pronounced, but in the secondary, it's not. It really is acceptable. Many words in English have primary and secondary pronunciations. *Orient(ed)*: We're not dealing with pronunciation in this case; we're dealing with what you believe to be a "false verb." Well, there really is a verb *to orientate*, and it's a synonym for *to orient*. Everybody has an idiolect, the personal way that each speaker uses his/her native language. In your idiolect, *orient* is the verb, but in other peoples', it's orientate. They're both acceptable. *Nuclear*: You're totally right about the mispronunciation of this word. It's a phenomenon that arises out of what is easiest for the tongue and other muscles of the mouth to do. This holds true for *ask*, which in Chaucer's time was actually *aks* (*aksen*)! Over the centuries, the sounds of /k/ and /s/ got reversed. The reason some people say *aks* is that it's easier for many people to go from the back of the mouth to the front (from /k/ to /s/) than to go from the front to the back (from /s/ to /k/). *In regard to*: Right again! Regard should be singular in this phrase and also in the phrase *with regard to*.

Here's the "Food for Thought" from our last issue: We can say "I heard her sing," "I heard her singing," "I saw the cars crash," but not "I saw the cars crashing." Why? Adrianne Ochoa of Atlanta, GA, sent in the right answer. Here's my explanation: The *-ing*, which I call one of many kinds of "direct object companions," is reduced from the past progressive in this case, indicating an action in progress—the singing was in progress; the speaker did not witness the end of it. If we use the basic verb form, *sing*, it represents the simple past or completed action in this case, which means the speaker witnessed the end of the singing. However, an action like *crash* doesn't work in the progressive form since it's something finished in the blink of an eye. Only the basic verb form, *crash*, will work in this case, representing the simple past. It means the speaker witnessed the end of that action. Keep in mind that the *-ing* form direct object companion always represents an action in progress whether the sentence is in the past, present or future. Furthermore, the basic verb form direct object companion always represents a completed action.

Here's more "Food for Thought": Is the following italicized phrase "acceptable" English?: *The guy who won the lottery's* relatives are all hitting him up for loans.

Richard Firsten is an ESL instructor, teacher trainer and author specializing in grammar and methodology. He currently teaches at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center in Miami, Florida.



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Active Skills for Reading—Neil Anderson's Innovative New Four-Level Series

BY NATALIE HESS

Active Skills for Reading, Books 1-4
by Neil Anderson, Heinle & Heinle, 2002

In a presentation at last year's TESOL conference, Neil Anderson spoke movingly about his quest to promote literacy in ESL/EFL. Like all TESOL professionals, Anderson always knew that his students should read more, read faster, read better and enjoy reading more. The problem was that everyone repeated these platitudes, but no one seemed to say just how to accomplish the feat of developing excellent readers. Now Anderson himself is taking a stab at it with ACTIVE, his new four-level series. The acronym stands for activate knowledge, cultivate vocabulary, teach for comprehension, increase fluency, verify strategies and evaluate progress.

The four graded books provide level-appropriate, high-interest material that moves from relevant high beginning passages to challenging intermediate ones. Each book has 16 units, each with two passages that focus on a theme. The themes are all pertinent to modern student life. Book One, for example, deals with managing stress, finances, and the changing family. Book Two features topics such as the world of work, modern communication, and health maintenance. Book Three offers high-interest units such as "Cultural Differences" and "The Mystery of Memory." Book Four includes "Laugh and the World Laughs with You" and "Emotional Intelligence" among a host of other compelling topics. Anderson has managed to present issues that spark interest, elicit language and trigger authentic conversation. He has not avoided the controversial, but he has stayed away from contention. For example, Book Three has a chapter that deals sympathetically with "Stay-at-Home Dads."

The thematic approach allows for intensive exploration and the recycling of vocabulary. But unlike many other thematically arranged texts, which tend to beat a subject to death, ACTIVE has only two reading passages per unit, thus promoting in-depth work without tedium.

Each unit offers ample comprehension exercises, varied vocabulary work, interesting language points, and plenty of interaction. The language work is always useful and varied. For example, the dictionary work in Book Two is well constructed and clearly beneficial. The illustrations are purposeful and should spark language interaction although I often wished that bright colors had been provided, especially in the unit that displays "The World of Art," Unit 14 of Book Three.

The organization of the four books is impressive and will make any reading teacher's life easier. Students are guided by the charts, by the contrastive highlighting and the pattern of the recurring ACTIVE methodology. Each unit opens with a "getting ready" section that activates and expands on previous knowledge, and each reading is illuminated through an accompanying reading strategy. Thus, for example, when students are asked to scan an article for specific facts, they are told "When reading something to find certain information, we move our eyes quickly across the text. When we 'scan' like this, we do not read every word or stop when we see a word we do not know; instead we read quickly, stopping only to find the information we need." (Book One, p. 2)

As a certified chocolate addict, I especially enjoyed Chapter One of Book Two, which is dedicated to this sweet temptation. The title of this chapter is provocative: "Eat Chocolate—It might be good for you." This admonition is followed by pictures for discussion. These are good enough to eat! Prior knowledge is further activated and investigated as students circle answers in sentences such as "Chocolate is made from the (fruit/leaves) of trees" and "Originally chocolate came from (Europe/The Americas)." (Book 2, p. 2)

The unit guides us to a passage about "The History of Chocolate." Here the reading strategy is "reading for clues." We then read "Addicted to Chocolate" and learn how the product that everyone feels guilty eating might just be more friend than foe.

Throughout the passage, as everywhere in the books, difficult words are foot-noted and given clear explanations in easily recognized and color-coded spaces. In the "Vocabulary in Context" section, the chocolate unit features work with parts of speech, as well as a structured conversation on the pros and cons of chocolate consumption.

All four books offer extensive exercises that can be done both in class and as homework. The reading-rate charts and the reading-comprehension charts at the end of each volume are outstanding and unusual features of these books. These charts can be used to challenge students to monitor their own progress. Each book also provides a vocabulary index, an excellent tool for review, and maps of the world, a visual aid helpful to most class discussions. The skills index in each of the four books should also be a useful review tool for both students and teachers.

I find Anderson's integrationist-based pedagogical framework very valuable. The ACTIVE series is a significant contribution to ESL/EFL practice.

Natalie Hess, Ph.D., is a professor in the BME/ESL program at NAU in Yuma, AZ. She has taught EFL/ESL in six countries and has written several textbooks and teacher resource books.

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The Peace Project

A Personal Path to Overcoming Intolerance

BY STEPHANEY JONES-VO

ESL students at Urbandale High School near Des Moines, Iowa noticed a growing tension among their classmates and reported an increased incidence of hostile acts directed toward ESL students. Name-calling was on the rise and violence seemed imminent. Urbandale's ESL students come mostly from Bosnia but also from Sudan, Albania, Vietnam, Mexico, Poland and Brazil. These students identified a crisis and wanted to address it, but they weren't certain how to proceed. Meeting after school in the ESL classroom, these newcomer and refugee students began to create the "Peace Project," a student-centered, interactive presentation designed to improve relationships among immigrant students and their native peers.

Planning the Peace Project

With the approval and enthusiastic support of the high school principal and their ESL teacher, a cadre of 30 students developed an outline for their "Peace Project" program. They decided to visit content area classes such as social studies, health and special education as invited guests, a dozen at a time, to present their interactive program to an entire host class. Their success would depend on the willingness of classroom teachers to integrate the Peace Project into their particular curricula.

Each Peace Project presentation begins with the ESL students sharing aspects of their cultures and highlighting contributions made by refugees and immigrants to the United States and to the world. This builds rapport with the host participants. After breaking the ice, ESL students share personal stories of war and escape from their homelands and detail how they ended up in the United States. Sharing these personal recollections of often tragic experiences has proven to be the most powerful tool in building relationships based on compassion, resulting in greater understanding and improved tolerance.

A Peace Project Program in Action

On the day of a Peace Project program, the ESL students arrive at the host classroom and arrange the seats in a circle, interspersing themselves evenly among the host students. This reduces sidebar chatting and promotes a collegial atmosphere. Next, each ESL student introduces himself to the host group including his name, country of origin and the length of time he has been living in the United States. If time allows, each host student introduces himself as well. This formalized beginning makes for a more attentive audience.

Next, the designated ESL student moderator directs the host group to observe a Bosnian folk dance called the "kolo." Strains of authentic Bosnian music fill the classroom, and the ESL students take to the floor, forming a circle. After modeling the simple dance steps, the ESL students invite their hosts into the circle. Amidst the laughter and mis-steps, students begin to have fun. Mission accomplished—the group is ready to move on to the next topic in the program: debunking myths surrounding refugee resettlement in the United States.

Armed with brochures, facts and statistics, the next designated ESL student queries the hosts, "How many of you have heard that refugees don't pay taxes?" Hands go up. "How many have heard that refugees take jobs away from Americans?" Again, hands wave in the air. She responds, "I want to tell you the truth," and proceeds to hand out brochures provided by the Bureau of Refugee Services. Host students are surprisingly candid with their comments about what they have heard about refugees. Firsthand information from the refugees themselves is extremely credible. Both ESL and host students are now freely exchanging their views and clarifying the facts. As needed, the ESL teacher facilitates the discussion, aiming to involve as many of the students as possible.

The program continues as a different ESL student asks the class his assigned question, "Are there any students here whose parents or grandparents are immigrants?" The responses yield a surprisingly wide variety of national origins. Encouraged, the ESL student presses on, "Do you know why your relatives came to the United States?" As most of the host students realize that they are ignorant on this point, the Peace Project gathers momentum.

Now each ESL student poses a question to the other ESL students, questions such as "What was your first day of school in America like?" and "Tell us about your lifestyle before you came to the United States." ESL students answer as they feel comfortable, supporting each other and sharing the floor.

Personal Stories of War

After the stage has been set, it is time to turn up the intensity of the exchange and get some of the hard work done. A Bosnian ESL student ask the other Bosnian students, "Did anyone experience any of the war firsthand? Does anyone have a souvenir from home? Is anyone comfortable talking about your personal experience? Would you be willing to share it with our group?" What follows is the heart of the entire Peace Project.

The ESL students know from experience that this is the most emotionally draining part of the presentation. They must dig into their memories of the horrors they have witnessed and experienced and be willing to talk about them once again. There is no prescribed order in the responses. The ESL students, who have repeated the program dozens of times, wait for the first student who feels ready to respond. The power of the Peace Project lies in the fact that these students are revealing the personal consequences of violence and intolerance. If students are doing back-to-back presentations, it is too stressful for any single student to respond each time. Training thirty volunteer ESL participants allows a rotation of speakers and keeps the Peace Project fresh and unique each time.

The students have vivid memories—Aida recounts the day her school was bombed and her classmates killed. She tells how the blood lingered in the snow and ice for a long time. She recalls how her brother was shot outside of their home, and she escaped through the cramped tunnel beneath the capital, Sarajevo. Another student describes how many people died in that narrow, oxygen-depleted tunnel and what it was like living without food, water and heat. In a stunning and unplanned gesture, one student who had been living in United States for less than two years gently removes a pair of carefully folded socks from her pocket, softly recounting details surrounding her father's murder. She tells her classmates that these are the socks he was wearing at the time. Even though she has presented before, this is the first time she has shared this personal artifact. All of the students are deeply moved, many to tears. One ESL student reaches over to take her hand. Teachers reach for the tissues.

A Sudanese student, wearing the bright "kinte" cloth suit he wore on the plane when he first traveled to the United States, relates how he was kidnapped and put in jail at eleven years old. His captors tried to extort money from his relatives. He recalls the long, Nuer tribal password containing generations of family names which gained him access at dangerous crossings. He relates how grateful he is to be in the United States, ready to graduate from high school and attend a university.

A newcomer from Albania expresses gratitude to the military in Kosovo that saved his life. He shows an army emblem from a uniform he has brought with him.

Personal testimony continues as a Bosnian girl explains that her father was taken from her family by the enemy when she was ten years old, and that she, along with her younger siblings, lived for two months without any parents at all. She then produces a key, but is overwhelmed with emotion and unable to speak. Her younger sister explains that the key is to the front door of their house which no longer exists, destroyed in the war.

Another Bosnian girl pulls out a small, ragged stuffed dog given to her by her grandma. She elaborates that her grandmother, a Muslim, was forced to live in a camp for Muslims, apart from the Catholic members of her own family. A relief organization had sent the little toy to the Muslim camp. It was all Grandma had to give her granddaughter. She relates how much she treasures the little dog and how much she misses her Grandma.

The Impact on Host Students

The mood in the classroom among all the students is now somber and respectful. Host students are listening and even shedding tears with the presenters. The ESL teacher has learned that taking a box of tissues to pass around the circle is practical and appreciated. Each ESL student has vivid memories and a compelling story; each presentation is unique and depends upon which ESL students choose to share at that moment. The more empathetic the hosts, the more willing the ESL students are to tell their true stories. It is a mutually beneficial process; the ESL students are being validated and understood by their peers, perhaps for the first time. In addition, the hosts are learning more about the world around them while cognitively making connections that may affect their future behaviors. They seem to become infused with compassion.

Tying It All Together

Time is running out in the eighty-minute class period. An ESL student poses the concluding questions: "Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how to prevent the cycle of mistrust, discrimination, hate and violence from happening in our community? What can we do to promote peace, understanding and respect for others?" The host students raise their hands and respond. ESL students process ideas and comments with their hosts.

At the end of the presentation, the ESL student moderator thanks all the Peace Project participants, and the students applaud each other. As a gesture of goodwill, the ESL students distribute fortune cookies to their hosts, ending on a positive note. Reflection sheets are given to classroom teachers to give to their students and return to the ESL teacher within 48 hours. Immediately reflecting on input, articulating conclusions and connecting personal attitudes with the school environment comprise a critical piece of the Peace Project: developing higher order thinking skills. As one philosopher put it, "Everyone wants to save the world, but no one wants to help mom with the dishes." Giving students time to sift and organize all the data that have been presented and to formulate meaningful conclusions applicable to daily living are central to the success of the Peace Project.

Feedback provided by host students on reflection sheets guides the on-going development of the Peace Project. Following Peace Project presentations to 266 eighth graders over a two-day period during Black History Month in February 2002, student reflection was guided by this prompt: "Based on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of tolerance and non-violence, do you have any ideas on how to prevent the cycle of hate and violence in our community?" Student responses on individual reflection sheets clearly indicated that students can make the connection between their behavior and the existence tolerance and non-violence (see page 24). The work of building community by breaking down interpersonal barriers, as demonstrated in the student-centered Peace Project, is valuable and necessary to promote intercultural understanding and peace in our own communities and schools.

As a teacher, I feel that the Peace

Peace Project Presentation Items

When making a Peace Project class presentation, the following items may be helpful:

- **Copies of the Peace Project program outline** for all ESL students and teachers, listing each designated student and his assigned question, and detailing activities in order.
- **Inspirational posters,** for example, one of Dr. Albert Einstein that notes, "A bundle of belongings isn't the only thing a refugee brings to his new country. Einstein was a refugee." or of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., connecting the refugee experience with the philosophy of tolerance and non-violence.
- **Brochures and handouts** related to refugee facts from the Bureau of Refugee Services.
- **CD player and folk music.**
- **Photos or souvenirs** belonging to ESL students from their native countries.
- **Reflection sheets** to be filled out by host students following the Peace Project presentation.
- **Box of tissues.**
- **Fortune cookies**, individually wrapped (depending on food policy of the school,) or homemade international treats to share.

Peace Project Reflection Prompts

After the presentation, reflection sheets help bring meaningful closure to the experience. Possible questions include:

- How did you feel after hearing the ESL students share their experiences of war?
- What new insight or understanding did you gain after participating in the Peace Project?
- Do you see any relationship between Dr. King's message of tolerance and non-violence and the experience of these ESL students?

Project is one of the most powerful, enriching and far-reaching instructional strategies I have ever witnessed. Any ESL class, regardless of ethnic make-up, can replicate it, and I encourage ESL teachers to present this idea to their own students.

Stephaney Jones-Vo, a former K-12 and university ESL teacher, is director of two Title III grants targeting ELL achievement and literacy in Des Moines public schools. Her Peace Project students were recognized by the Grinnell Peace Institute with the first place award in 2001 for promoting peace and understanding within schools.

ESL Magazine's Online Poll

Promoting cross-cultural understanding is a goal of your ESL/EFL program.

69%	**strongly agree**
29%	**agree**
1%	**disagree**
0%	**strongly disagree**

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Peace Project Student Comments

These are comments made anonymously by eighth grade students on reflection sheets following Peace Project presentations in February, 2002.

"...that made me want to help other people that were hurt."

"After the Peace Project I was amazed. I know some of their culture and some of their aching memories. I do have a different viewpoint."

"I was relieved that they were so open because that gave me a lot of confidence, too...I respect them a lot more."

"As you spoke I got chills and almost cried for you."

"The ESL students were trying to help us understand that they are just normal people who have gone through so much."

"After yesterday, I had a much better understanding of refugees."

"I had a lot more respect for refugees in general. I also learned that many of the widespread rumors about refugees aren't true."

"Even though they are different from us they deserve equal treatment."

"I think that if we keep having the ESL students come and talk that they will make an impact on our lives. Because of them, I'm going to try hard to not be rude or racist to anybody."

"I felt touched by their experiences, and it really had an effect on how I feel."

"I felt they were brave and courageous people for sharing their stories."

"I feel that I have more respect than ever for people from other countries."

"Dr. King and the ESL students are trying to teach us not to hate each other just because we are different."

"I felt happy that they opened up to us. I understand the myths [about refugees] and most of them aren't true."

"I realize we can take Dr. King's message and apply it to our everyday lives with ESL students."

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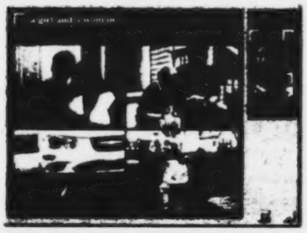

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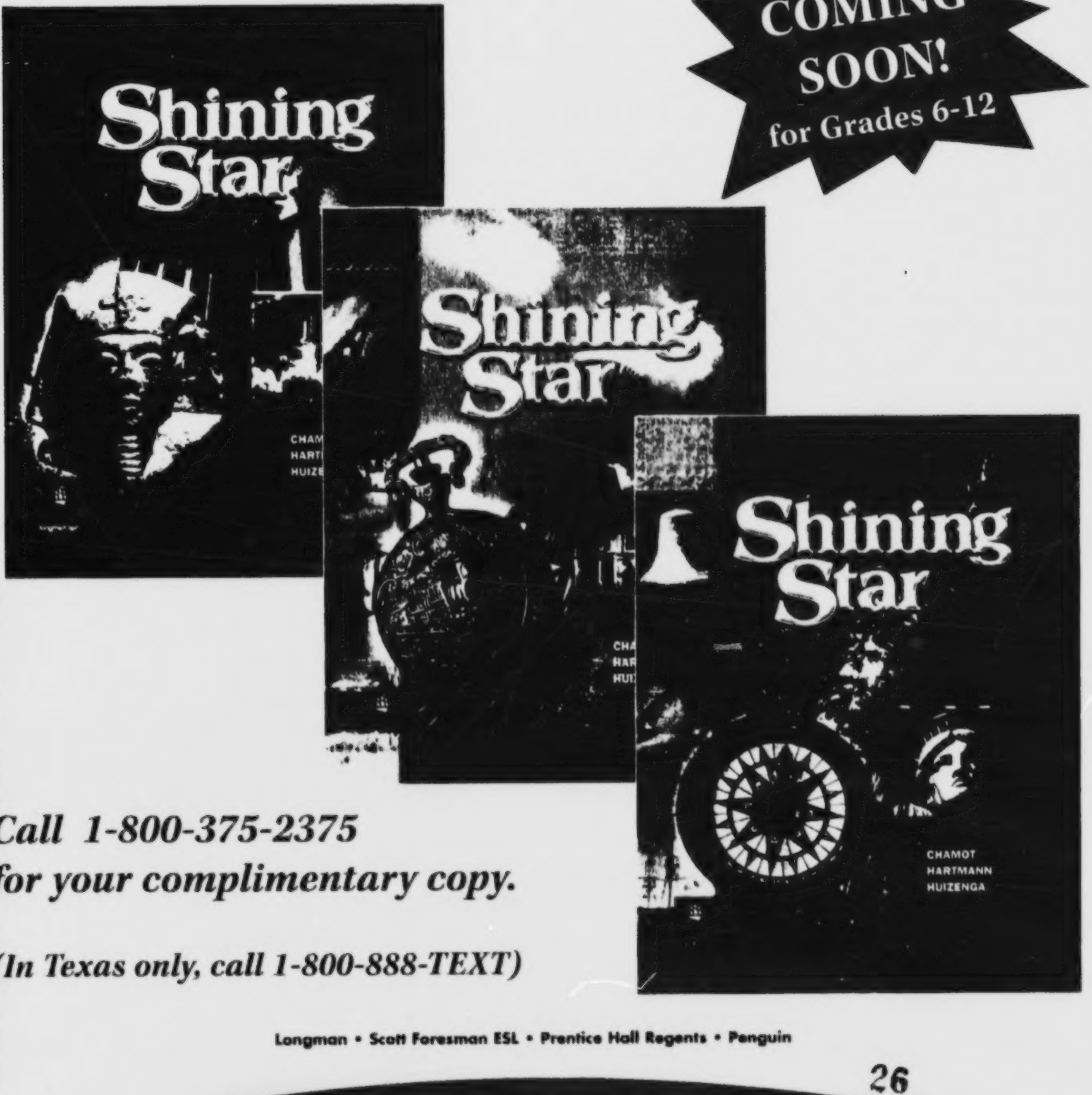

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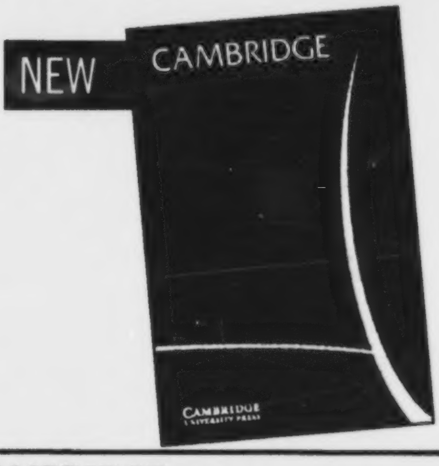

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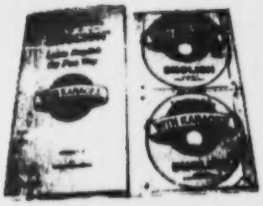

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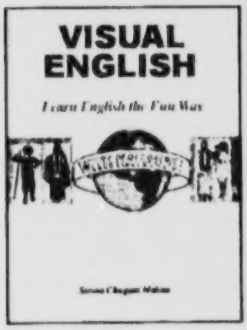

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Supporting Excellence for Part-Time Instructors

BY GUEST COLUMNIST JACK LONGMATE

Even though ESL is among the fastest growing teaching fields, a high percentage of ESL teaching jobs are part-time. In Washington State's community colleges, for example, no other field relies upon part-timers as much as ESL, at 79%. This compares to 73% for ABE/GED courses, 52% for English composition, and 33% for the sciences (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges 1998, 11). How should ESL's professional associations respond? TESOL's mission is "to ensure excellence in English language teaching to speakers of other languages" (www.tesol.org/index.html#about). But promoting teaching excellence is profoundly challenged when many ESOL practitioners are part-time.

Not all of ESL teaching is dominated by part-timers. In U.S. public schools, part-time educators make up around 12% of the certified staff, with pay that is fully pro-rated—those who teach at 50% of full-time receive 50% of the pay and benefits; thus, there is no cost incentive to hire part-timers. At colleges, by contrast, a significant cost-incentive exists for hiring part-time faculty since part-time pay is not proportional, but 40 or 50 cents on the dollar, which explains why over 60% of U.S. community college faculty are part-time. To demonstrate the discounted part-time rate, while the average full-time pay is roughly $46,000 at my institution, a part-timer assigned a full-time load would earn only $22,000. But since part-timers aren't given full-time assignments, the actual part-time earnings are closer to $16,000 or less.

Reliance on non-pro-rated part-time employees degrades the quality of teaching. Poverty-level wages directly affect professional growth and teaching excellence by precluding membership in professional associations, journal subscriptions or attendance at national or even affiliate conferences. This is corroborated by a 1997 TESOL survey which revealed that only 10% of its members teach part-time and only 12% have incomes less than $25,000 annually (TESOL 1997, 16). Even for those part-timers for whom finances are not restrictive, the lack of job security in part-time jobs tends to undermine a commitment to "excellence in teaching" and professional growth.

TESOL has taken a positive step by removing the $13 fee to join its Caucus on Part-Time Employment Concerns (COPTEC), TESOL's part-time advocacy arm. The Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC) has a "Professional Equity Project," which offers 100 grants of $250 each to help part-timer members attend its annual convention; unfortunately, CCCC has had trouble finding individuals to apply for those funds (Williamson 2002). The sum of $250 only partially covers the expense of travel, lodging and conference registration. Offering regional workshops is an alternative to paying for part-timers to attend national conferences. This was proposed by Jocelyn Graf, chair of the part-time committee of the Illinois TESOL and chair-elect of TESOL's COPTEC.

If the working conditions of ESL professions are to improve, TESOL will play a role. TESOL has urged that "institutions and programs that provide ESOL instruction make a concerted effort to ensure the equitable treatment of part-time faculty," and specifically that part-time educators receive "adequate working conditions, salary, health benefits and pensions in fair proportion or parity with those available to full-time instructors." (TESOL 2000). Not only is this appeal based on an ethical regard for educators and civic decency, it is the chief mission of the association: to promote excellence in teaching.

Jack Longmate is an adjunct English instructor at Olympic College in Bremerton, WA and past chair of COPTEC.

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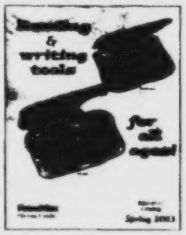

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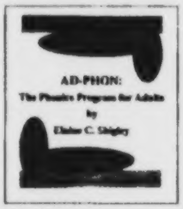

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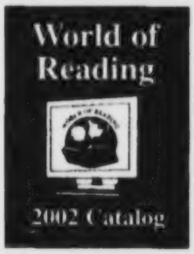

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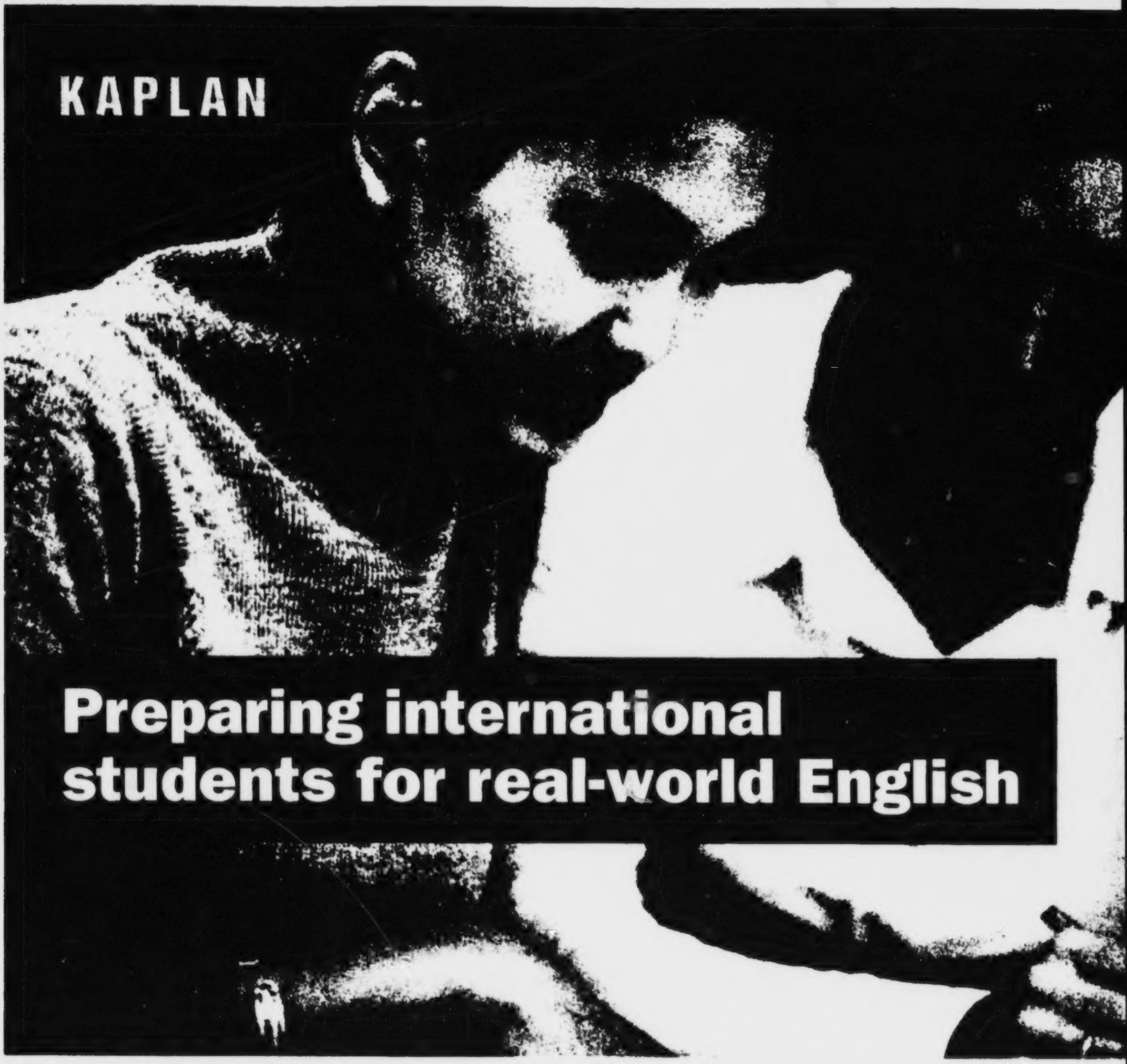

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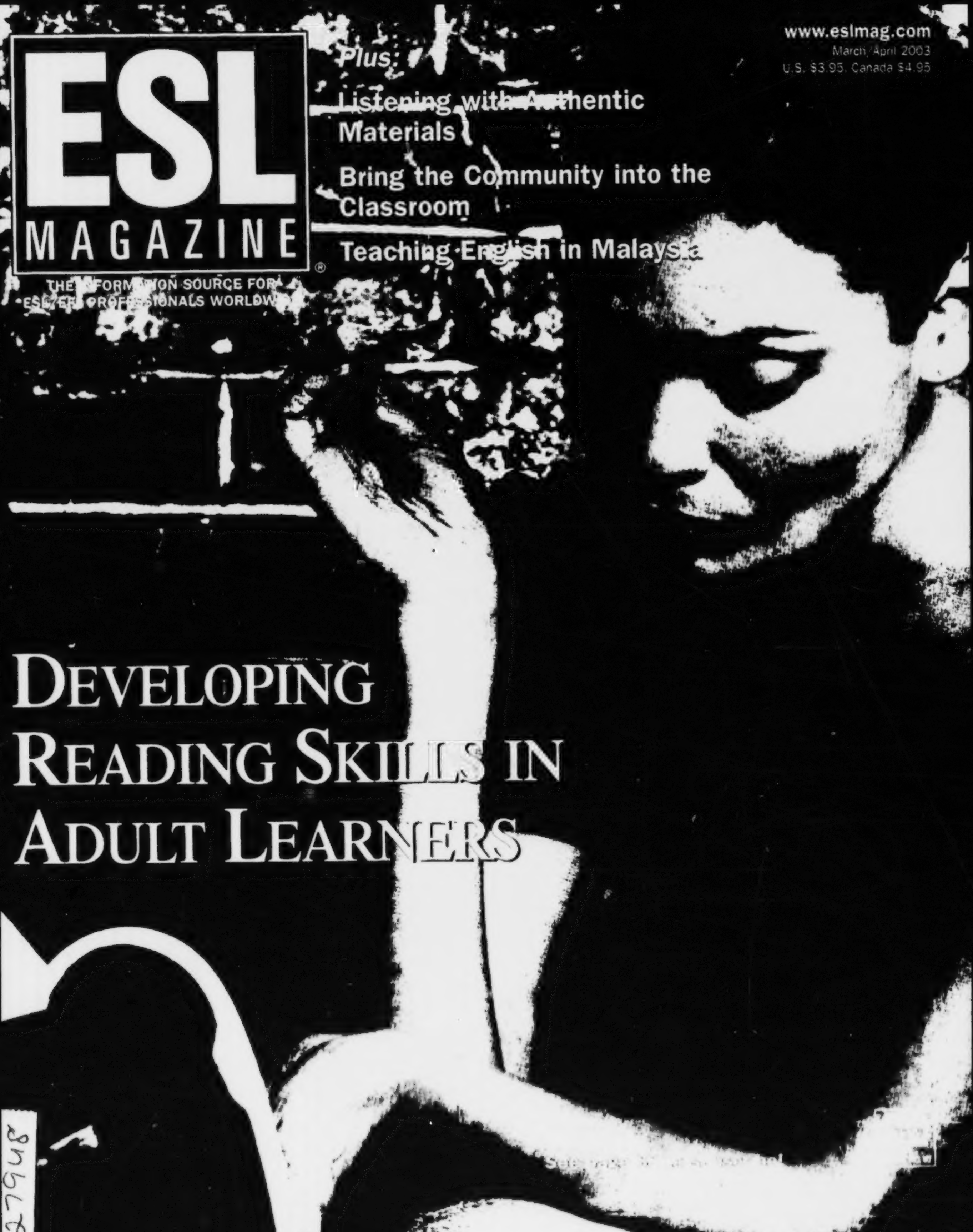

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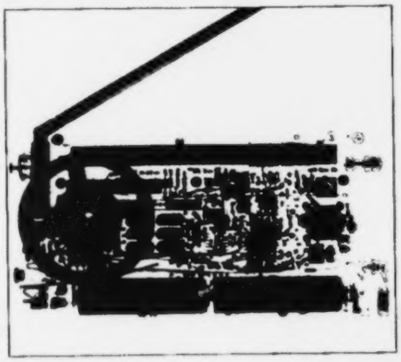

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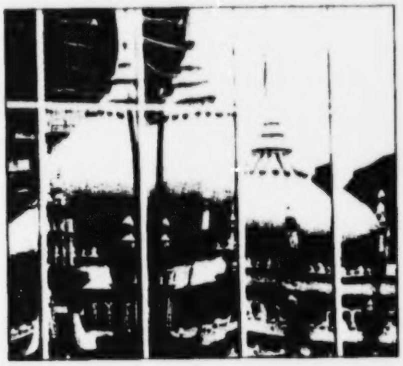

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Who's Reading *ESL Magazine*?

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Literacy, Listening and More...

eachers of adult ESL learners often have classrooms that are diverse not only in the nationalities and ethnicities represented among their students, but in the literacy levels of their students. Meeting the needs of a diverse group poses quite a challenge. Miriam Burt and Joy Kreeft Peyton describe six different literacy types and how teachers can assist students at each level of literacy.

Lindsay Miller shares some great ideas for finding and using authentic materials for listening activities. Radio, TV, video, Internet, CD-ROM—with this variety of media available, there are many opportunities for teachers to provide authentic listening materials that help students develop truly useful skills and enjoy themselves in the process.

Need an alternative to taking your students on a field trip? Bring the community into the classroom. Kathleen Olson tells us how guest speakers, community publications and lots of other resources can help students learn English and actually be able to use it in their communities.

While Malaysia is a diverse nation with three main ethnic groups, these people form a unified nation with the help of Bahasa Malaysia, the official language, and English, which is widely used in all walks of life. The efforts of the government and educators to promote excellence in English are admirable.

All the best!

Marilyn Rosenthal

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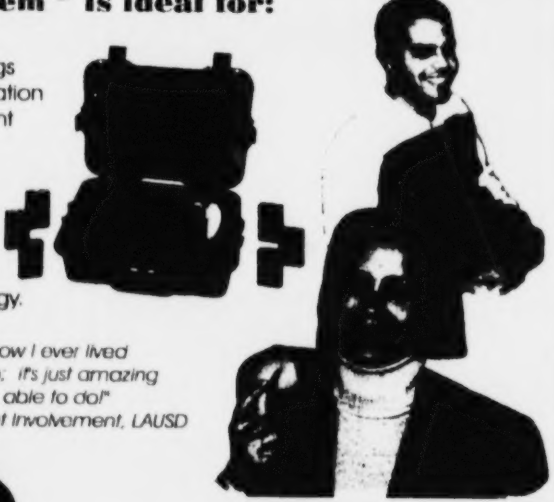

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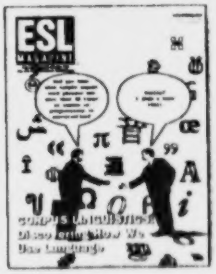

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Corpus Linguistics

▶ Thank you for the interesting article on corpus linguistics. As I read about the American corpus project, I thought about the differences in language from place to place in the U.S. An interesting project for ESL students would be to interview native English-speaking Americans and ask them to describe some of the regional differences in English (for example, is it *soda* or *pop*? *sub sandwich* or *grinder*?). Also, various subcultures have their own corpora (hip hop, for example). Another question for research and discussion is how the media influence the "American" corpus. I'm sure nobody has heard the words "regime" or "embedded" as much as we have lately!

—ANNE SCOTT
Glen Burnie, MD

Peace Project

▶ Thanks for the article on The Peace Project. It's another example of when we know each others' stories we can understand, be empathetic and start to forge authentic relationships. The host students will look at other new ESL students with different eyes wondering about their stories and having some feel for what they went through to get to this country. Hurray for Stephaney Jones-Vo for seeking a solution instead of just wringing her hands.

—AVON CRAWFORD
Literacy and Professional Development Coordinator, Des Moines Public Schools

Part-Time Teaching

▶ I agree with Jack Longmate's article on part-time teaching. I am a recent graduate of an M.A. program, which I was told was a prerequisite to obtaining a full-time teaching position on the university level. Upon graduating, I was dismayed to discover that no full-time positions are available in my city (Atlanta). Granted, the political and economic aftermath of 9/11 has greatly affected the ESL job market. I did obtain a part-time position at an institution where over half of the teachers on campus are adjuncts. Recently, the faculty and staff newsletter published an article celebrating this fact, citing that adjunct faculty members add diversity (of professional backgrounds) to the academic environment. I feel the opposite, that "reliance on non-pro-rated part-time employees degrades the quality of teaching." Now that I have education and some experience under my belt, I'd like the opportunity to contribute to a university-level academic program. I am denied this, however, by not being included in the program's decision-making process. Even though we are part-time, we deserve substantial pay, benefits and a chance to help improve the curriculum. Higher educational institutions should realize that it is better to have a small, full-time staff than only one or two full-time faculty members with several part-time faculty members (less turnover and training, more familiarity with the program and students, more investment, etc.). In the long run, it is more beneficial for everyone.

—ADRIANNE P. OCHOA
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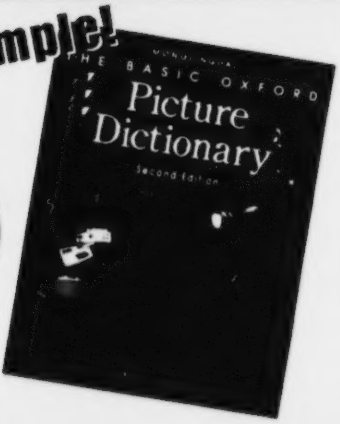

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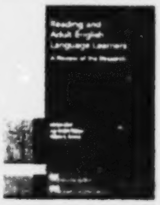
Free Report on Adult Literacy



The Center for Applied Linguistics has recently published *Reading and Adult English Language Learners: A Review of the Research* by authors Miriam Burt, Joy Peyton and Rebecca Adams. The authors acknowledge that learning to read in English is difficult for adult English language learners. Teachers know that their learners come from diverse backgrounds, have different experiences with literacy in their first languages, and have various reasons for learning English. They also know that there is no simple recipe to help their students become proficient readers. This report summarizes the research on adult English language learners reading English, offers ESL teachers and administrators suggestions for instruction, and points to areas where further research is needed. It is available for free at www.cal.org.

NAFSA Reports "Serious Glitches" in Foreign Student Tracking System

More than two months after the original deadline for U.S. institutions to begin using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to admit international students and scholars, NAFSA: Association of International Educators reports that serious problems continue to plague SEVIS, problems that could jeopardize international educational exchanges, particularly the entering class of international students and scholars expected for fall 2003 enrollment.

SEVIS users across the country are reporting problems with data integrity, technical reliability, system communication and support and training.

SEVIS sometimes loses data that has been properly entered into the system—in some cases, numerous times. School officials are not authorized to correct certain errors and are sometimes advised by the SEVIS Help Desk to create new records, thus creating multiple files for a single student. This brings into serious question the reliability and integrity of the SEVIS data. Erroneous data can directly affect the legal status of thousands of international students and scholars in the U.S.

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Users navigating SEVIS often encounter technical problems that affect the ability of school officials to report correctly on their students. Users have found numerous identical listings for one school's various locations, system time-outs occur after just a few minutes, forms printed at one school have been discovered at a school in another state, documents have printed without complete information. Tasks that INS estimated would take only minutes sometimes require hours or days to complete. It is unclear what the impact of such errors may be on students who are legitimately enrolled but whose records are affected by technical glitches.

SEVIS was intended to be a fully integrated electronic database, shared by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. However, schools and students are not finding this to be the case. Schools create records in SEVIS and generate admissions documents for students, as required, but some consular officers have reported to students who appear to apply for visas that they cannot find their records in the database and thus cannot process their visa applications. Such communication failures are already resulting in serious delays for prospective international students and scholars.

Users are reporting extensive delays, ranging from hours to days, in getting responses from the SEVIS Help Desk. Help Desk staff are often unable to provide information about the status of transmissions by institutions that experience problems or to advise users on how to correct errors or address glitches. The training of immigration officials in the use of SEVIS—at ports of entry, the Help Desk, and regional service centers—remains inadequate.

NAFSA has expressed concern that SEVIS was implemented with "very little testing of the system's capacity to sustain a high volume of use." That high-volume period is now quickly approaching, and SEVIS is being "tested" as it is implemented. System users estimate that one million records will need to be added to SEVIS in the next four months. There is great concern that it will not be able to sustain this volume of data and that there will be a major system failure at the height of the summer travel and fall enrollment periods.

NAFSA recommends reinstituting the grace period previously declared by INS, during which these problems could be addressed. Schools could use pre-SEVIS forms and procedures if they found SEVIS impossible to use due to technical difficulties. This would involve no loss of monitoring capability because a transitional system required by the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 gave the government the capacity to track students even before SEVIS became mandatory.

ESL Pioneer Russell Campbell Passes On

Russell N. Campbell, Ph.D., teacher trainer, author and researcher in ESL/EFL, passed away on March 30, 2003 following a short battle with a reoccurrence of cancer. Dr. Campbell was featured in the January/February 1998 *ESL Magazine* article "A Tribute to ESL Pioneers":

"Russell Campbell is best known for his work in design, implementation, and evaluation of international TEFL projects and research and development in heritage language education. Over the past 35 years he has written or edited several books on methodology and English language teaching. He was chair of UCLA Applied Linguistics and TESL department for nine years; president of International TESOL (1972-73); coordinator of research and development programs in China, Egypt, Mexico, Armenia, Hungary; a teacher trainer at UCLA, in Thailand and Korea; dean of the English Department, American University of Armenia (under UCLA contract); and researcher in bilingual education. He is professor emeritus in the Applied Linguistics and TESL Department at UCLA and director of the UCLA Language Resource Program. Advice to ESL Professionals: 'Learn from your students!'"

Dr. Campbell also served on the Board of Trustees for the Center for Applied Linguistics from 1991 to 1996. For more information about Dr. Campbell, visit www.cal.org.

Conference Calendar

March

- 12-14 **TESOL Arabia**. Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Contact Kathy Bird, kathy_bird@zu.ac.ae.
- 22-25 **American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL)**. Arlington, VA. Contact Jim Yoshioka, 808-956-9424.
- 25-29 **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)**. Baltimore, MD. Contact 703-836-0774.

April

- 4-6 **TESOL Spain**. Valencia, Spain. Contact dwestall@idm.upv.es
- 10-12 **Arizona TESOL**. Mesa, AZ. Website: http://www.az-tesol.org/2003 conference/menu.htm.
- 10-13 **CATESOL**. Pasadena, CA. Contact Eleanor Black, 323-343-4330.
- 17-18 **Isik University International ELT Conference**. Istanbul, Turkey. http://www.eltc2003.isikun.edu.tr.
- 22-26 **IATEFL Conference**. Brighton, United Kingdom. Website: http://www.iatefl.org.
- 25 **Arkansas TESOL**. Arkadelphia, AR. Contact Sharon Nichols, 501-450-4870.
- 25-26 **Tennessee TESOL**. Franklin, TN. Contact Kim Llorens, 615-790-0892.

May

- 3 **PennTESOL East**. Philadelphia, PA. Website: http://penntesol.org.
- 27-29 **Damascus University International TEFL Conference**. Damascus, Syria. Contact Waddah Al Khatib, +963-11-212-0321.
- 28-29 **TESOL Ukraine**. Sevastopol, Ukraine. Contact Svitlana Gladio, tesol_ua@tesol.org.

June

- 7 **Kentucky TESOL**. Cincinatti, OH. Contact Anita Lewis, 513-674-4244.
- 26-28 **Korea Association of Teachers of English**. Daejeon, South Korea. Contact Dr. Lee, Hwa-ja, Lhj@sunchon.ac.kr.
- 27-29 **TESOL Academy 2003**. Washington, DC. Contact 703-836-0774.

July

- 11-13 **TESOL Academy 2003**. Denver, CO. Contact 703-836-0774.
- 31-August 2 **Japan Association for Language Education and Technology (LET)**. Osaka, Japan. E-mail PFB01373@nifty.ne.jp.

August

- 23-25 **URUTESOL. 2003 TESOL Southern Cone Regional Convention**. Montevideo, Uruguay. Contact urutesol2001@yahoo.com.

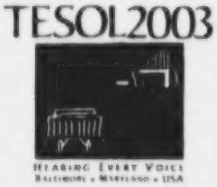
What Works Clearinghouse to Study Elementary ESL Interventions

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), established by the U.S. Department of of Education's Institution of Education Sciences, has announced topic areas for initial WWC Evidence Reports. These topic areas were chosen to meet the needs of K-12 and adult educators and education decision makers to identify and implement effective and replicable approaches to improve student outcomes. The seven topic areas chosen for systematic review in the first year of the WWC's operation reflect a wide range of education issues:

- Interventions for Beginning Reading
- Curriculum-Based Interventions for Increasing K-12 Math Achievement
- Preventing High School Dropout
- Programs for Increasing Adult Literacy
- Peer-Assisted Learning in Elementary Schools: Reading, Mathematics, and Science
- Interventions To Reduce Delinquent, Disorderly, and Violent Behavior in and out of School.
- Interventions for Elementary School English Language Learners: Increasing English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement

A work plan will be developed for each topic area, and an Evidence Report team will draft a review protocol that tailors the WWC standards of evidence to the systematic review for the specific topic area. The studies reviewed for each topic area will be determined by a search of published and unpublished research literature, including submissions from program and product developers. The WWC Evidence Reports will be reviewed against standards of scientific evidence set by the independent Technical Advisory Group and by peer reviewers. Beginning in fall 2003, WWC Evidence Reports will be posted online at http://www.w-w-c.org/topicnom.html#schedule.

TESOL's Annual Convention Attracts Thousands



Over 7,000 ESL/EFL professionals representing all educational levels attended the annual convention and exposition of the association Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) in Baltimore, MD in March this year—this despite recent world events and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's threat alert status of "orange" (second highest) for terrorist activity. There were 6,813 attendees from the U.S. and 1,011 from 111 other countries for a total attendance of 7,824. Two thousand one hundred forty-seven presenters from over 100 countries conducted 1,028 educational sessions. One hundred sixty-seven companies and organizations exhibited products and services for ESL/EFL professionals.

Christine Meloni's
NETWORTHY

Phil Quirke Supports ESL/ÆFL Teachers

Halfway through dinner with a group of TESOLers at the Baltimore convention, it suddenly hit me that the dynamic Englishman sitting across from me was the creator of a website that I had visited and admired. He was none other than Phil Quirke! He laughingly told us that people constantly tell him that his URL is spelled wrong: www.philseflsupport.com. But it is indeed correct; it's Phil's EFL Support. His mission is to provide support to candidates studying for a TESL/TEFL master's degree, but anyone who is teaching English will find lots of interesting information at this site.

The home page informs you that you will find over 70 pages and 150 links relevant to you and your work. You can take a look at Phil's newsletter, register for his database in order to link up with other professionals whose research interests are similar to yours, and sign up for bulletin board discussions on themes of your choice. The site is divided into four sections: Language, Teaching and Learning, Planning and Testing, and Study-Reading and Research.

Language: This page has five subcategories: Grammar, Lexis, The Skills (four or five?), Phonology and Discourse. Each offers papers, articles and links to relevant sites.

Teaching and Learning: This page includes papers, links, self-study exercises and reading lists in the following areas: Teaching Methodology, Learning, Technology, Independent Learning and Teacher Development.

Planning and Testing: The page is divided into Lesson Planning, Testing, Syllabus Design, Materials Production and ELT Management. Papers and links go from preparing single lessons to planning entire courses.

Study-Reading and Research: This page focuses on Reading, Research, Action Research, Writing Better Assignments and ELT Organizations.

Most Interesting Features

If I were asked to name the two features I liked the best, I would probably say the history of EFL and the journal links. On the Teaching and Learning page under Teaching Methodology, you will find "A Brief History of EFL to ESP" followed by 42 questions that you can ask yourself after you have read the history. On the Study-Reading and Research page in the Reading subcategory, you will find direct links to many ELT journals with full access to their articles.

Christine Meloni is associate professor of English as a foreign language in the EFL Department and senior research associate in the National Capital Language Resource Center at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. She can be reached at meloni@gwu.edu.

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—*Publisher's Weekly*

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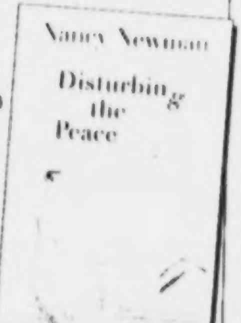
—*ESL Magazine, July/August 2002*



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Developing the Reading Abilities of Adults Learning English

BY MIRIAM BURT AND JOY KREEFT PEYTON

The ability to read is a critical skill for adults in the United States. As Bill Grabe and Frederika Stoller assert, "As we enter a new century, productive and educated citizens will require even stronger literacy abilities (including both reading and writing) in increasingly larger numbers of societal settings" (2002, 1). However, most of what we know about reading comes from research on English-speaking children in preschool through grade 12. (See, for example, the results of the National Reading Panel 2000; Snow, Burns and Griffin 1998.) There is very little research on reading that involves adults learning English as a second (or additional) language. (See Adams and Burt 2002; Burt, Peyton and Adams 2003, for a bibliography and a review of these studies.)

Who Are Adult English Language Learners?

The adult English language learner population in the United States is large. In 2001, 42% of adults enrolled in state-administered, federally funded adult education programs were enrolled in ESL classes; over one million adults (U.S. Department of Education 2002). These learners were also served in adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) classes, in private language schools, and in programs sponsored by community-based organizations and volunteer literacy organizations such as Pro-Literacy. They come from diverse backgrounds and have widely different experiences with literacy in their first languages.

A number of factors influence the ways that these adults learn to read in English. These factors include level of literacy in the first language and in English, oral language proficiency in English, educational background, goals for learning English, and the structure and writing system of the first language. These factors must be taken into account in all areas of instruction—program planning, learner placement in classes, and instructional approaches. In this article we describe how one of these factors, literacy in the first language, can affect the development of reading skills in English, and we give some suggestions for instruction.

How Does First Language Literacy Influence Reading Development?

Huntley (1992) described four types of literacy in the first language that affect English literacy development and should be taken into account in adult ESL literacy instruction: preliterate, nonliterate, semiliterate, and non-Roman alphabet literate. Birch (2002) adds to these types non-alphabet literate. Birch and others (Hilferty 1996; Strucker 2002) add Roman alphabet literate. In our discussion of these six types of first language literacy and their impact on English language learners' reading in English, we use two broad categories: limited literate (preliterate, nonliterate, semiliterate) and literate (non-alphabet literate, non-Roman alphabet literate, Roman alphabet literate).

Limited Literate Learners

Preliterate learners come from cultures where literacy is not common in everyday life because the language is not written, has only recently been written, or is being developed. For example, most Bantu people of Somalia are preliterate in their native Af-Maay because it has been written for only a short time (Van Lehman and Eno 2002). Preliterate English language learners often have had little or no exposure to written texts and may not be aware of the purposes of literacy in everyday life. Traditionally, literacy instruction for preliterate learners builds on their oral language knowledge and is supported by oral language activities (Carroll 1999). Preliterate learners generally progress slowly in literacy and other language instruction and require re-teaching of skills and concepts (Robson 1982; Strucker 2002). Those who never attended school as children may be unfamiliar with the behaviors and expectations of school.

Nonliterate learners come from cultures where literacy is available, but they have not had sufficient access to literacy instruction, often because of their socioeconomic status. For example, some adult learners from Central America may not know how to read or write in their native Spanish because of disrupted schooling due to war and poverty. These learners have probably had some exposure to written language and may have a greater awareness of the value and uses of literacy than preliterate learners. They may be reluctant, though, to let others know about their limited literacy background, and instruction with them may proceed slowly. These learners may also learn classroom content more slowly than other learners because they cannot make full use of textbooks, other printed materials, and class notes for review.

Semiliterate learners usually have had access to literacy in their native culture, but because of their socioeconomic status or educational situation, they have not achieved a high level of literacy in their native language. Like non-literate learners, they may have left school at a young age for economic or political reasons, as was the case with many Southeast Asian refugees and Central American immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s (Holt 1995).

Some students who have been educated primarily in the United States have characteristics similar to those of other limited literate learners. Referred to as "Generation 1.5" learners, they have immigrated to the United States, where they have attended schools and developed oral fluency in English. However, they are not literate in their native language, and they struggle with reading and writing in English. They may remain in ESL classes throughout elementary and secondary school and enter ESL programs as adults or need special attention in college programs (Harklau, Losey and Siegal 1999).

Many preliterate, nonliterate, and semiliterate learners, including Generation 1.5 learners, may approach English reading with trepidation. They need to be given opportunities to increase their self-confidence in educational situations and to develop positive images of themselves as readers (Goldberg 1997). At the same time, many have high oral skills in English, and they may have had positive experiences with learning through oral ESL instruction.

Literate Learners

Learners who are literate in some writing system have the advantage of experience with deciphering and assigning meaning to print and using print to enhance their learning. Learners who are nonalphabet literate read a language that is written logographically, such as Chinese and Japanese, and they may try to read in English by memorizing whole words. However, learners who try to read by recognizing whole words without deciphering the sound and symbol correspondences of written texts will not become proficient readers in alphabetic languages. Good readers in English have developed an "alphabetic strategy" (Birch 2002, 33); they are able to read and make sense of an alphabetic script in the way it was designed to be used (Adams 1994).

Non-Roman alphabet literate learners read in a language that uses a non-Roman alphabet that is phonetically based, such as Cyrillic or Thai. These learners have the advantage of being accustomed to reading with an alphabet, but they may struggle to find words in the dictionary and may need time to process written materials presented in class because the orthography of their first language is different from that of English. For example, Nepali students, whose Sanskrit-derived letters descend below the lines of text, may at first attempt to direct their visual attention below the lines of English text where only the "tails" of some English letters (g, j, p, q, and y) are written (Strucker 2002). Arabic students learning to read in English will have directionality issues (their alphabet reads right to left, the Roman, left to right). They are also likely to have problems with vowels, which are usually not written out in everyday Arabic writings (Ryan and Meara 1991). Strategies that these learners may have developed to read Arabic (e.g., relying on context to

Types of First Language Literacy and Effects on Second Language Literacy Learning

FIRST LANGUAGE LITERACY	EXPLANATION	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
Preliterate	The first language has no written form (e.g., many American indigenous, African, Australian, and Pacific languages).	Learners need exposure to the purposes and uses of literacy.
Nonliterate	Learners have no access to literacy instruction.	Learners may feel stigmatized.
Semiliterate	Learners have limited access to literacy instruction.	Learners may have had negative experiences with previous literacy learning.
Nonalphabet literate	Learners are fully literate in a language written in a nonalphabetic script (e.g., Chinese).	Learners need instruction in reading an alphabetic script and in the sound-syllable correspondences of English.
Non-Roman alphabet literate	Learners are literate in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet (e.g., Arabic, Greek, Korean, Russian, and Thai).	Learners need instruction in the Roman alphabet to transfer their first language literacy skills to English. Some, such as readers of Arabic, will need to learn to read from left to right.
Roman alphabet literate	Learners are fully literate in a language written in a Roman alphabet script (e.g., French, Croatian, and Spanish). They read from left to right and recognize letter shapes and fonts.	Learners need instruction in the specific letter-to-sound and sound-syllable correspondences of English.

determine which vowel sounds to assign to words) may not work as well in English reading and spelling, where vowels must be attended to (Birch 2002).

Both the nonalphabet literate and non-Roman alphabet literate learners have valuable reading skills in the first language that they may be able to transfer to second language reading, but they need direct, systematic, sequential instruction in the sound-to-symbol correspondences of written English (Strucker 2002).

Many adult ESL students are literate in a Roman alphabetic language (e.g., Spanish and Croatian). Like those literate in a non-Roman script or in a logographic script, these learners have already developed reading skills and formed reading behaviors in their first language. They know that written language can represent speech. Their educational background and literacy skills may be an important part of their self-image. They can study English texts, take notes in class to learn new vocabulary or structures, and read outside of class. The English alphabet will be more familiar to them than to others whose native language does not use the Roman alphabet. Many of them may appear to have little difficulty reading English, especially if their first language is a language such as Spanish, which has many cognates with English.

Roman-alphabet-literate learners still need to learn English sound-symbol correspondences before they are able to read well (Hilferty 1996; Strucker 2002). They need to know that English does not have the same level of correspondence between sound and written form that other orthographies or spelling systems do, that there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. Some letters are pronounced more than one way depending on the letters/sounds that follow (e.g., c in *citation* and *car*), and some sounds are represented by more than one letter (e.g., the hard /k/ sound can be written as c, k, or ck, often depending on the letters/sounds that precede and follow it). Sometimes letters in English are silent, as are the g and h in *right*. At the syllabic level, readers should learn, for example, that the combination *ough* can be pronounced as in *tough* and *rough* or as in *bought* and *sought*. Readers also need to learn the many pronunciations of vowels, including their sounds in stressed and unstressed syllables.

Meeting the Needs of All Types of Learners

Learning to read is not easy, and it is especially difficult for adults learning to read in a second language. Research suggests that all English language learners, regardless of the type of first language literacy in their background, need direct teaching in the English symbol system and in English sound-symbol correspondences. Previously learned reading strategies, learners' experience with and access to literacy, and the nature of their first language writing system contribute to the speed and ease with which the learner will acquire second language literacy. These factors, as well as English proficiency levels, should be considered when working with adults learning to read in English.

Miriam Burt, at the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), loves to read and has worked in adult ESL for more than 25 years.

Joy Kreeft Peyton, at NCLE and CAL, loves to work with and study the work of teachers of reading and writing.

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Technology

Discovering the Teacher-Developer Inside

Every teacher reaches a point at which the available materials do not meet the needs of a particular class or group of students. Traditionally, ESL teachers have been very resourceful and creative in overcoming this obstacle. We have compiled collections of authentic language resources, created unique texts, lectures, drawings and photos and integrated a vast array of realia into our lessons. Recently, many teachers have also begun creating computer-based materials.

It has become easy for average computer users to design interesting, interactive and elaborate materials. The Internet has instilled people with a desire to contribute their own creative ideas to the virtual community. So, I ask, shouldn't you be able to contribute as well?

Before you begin, you should identify your goals for using technology. If you are simply trying to impress your students with your technical prowess or you are replicating a traditional activity with a computer-based equivalent (with no noticeable benefit), you may want to reconsider.

Whether you are interested in simply creating an online quiz or designing an entire online course, you are only limited by your own imagination. You may want to get started by creating a few quizzes, review exercises or skill-based materials that support a course with no current computer-assisted language learning (CALL) content. You have three basic directions in which you can move: you can create simple exercises, more media-intensive exercises, or even complete courses.

Many exercise generators exist to help you create interactive materials. Two common examples are Hot Potatoes and Makers. Both provide a free materials creation interface with their own web server space so that you don't have to manage a website to use them. They are also easy to use and provide helpful step-by-step directions. (See links.)

If you already have some exercise developing skills, you may want to begin designing more media-intensive materials. You can add audio to an exercise by using an audio recording tool. There are many easy-to-use tools that allow you to record and save audio files. One free program, Purevoice®, allows you to record and compress sounds to transfer through email. Since these files are very compressed, they can also be used in conjunction with websites.

To incorporate video into a project, you can record your own video on a digital camcorder or transfer from video tapes. Many of today's computers are equipped to handle this input of video, but yours may require a small investment for a video card, firewire card, or other transfer device. While any such device is likely to include the necessary software, you can also use such free programs as iMovie (MacIntosh) and Movie Maker (Windows).

Creating your own materials can be fun and rewarding. Once you get some experience with these tools you are likely to see promising results. Many CALL specialists started out with simple experimentation. You never know what kind of interesting materials you may create until you try!

In the next issue we will take a look at how to extend the creation of such materials into an entire course as we discuss course management systems (CMS).

Links:

- Hot Potatoes: http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/
- Makers: http://lang.swarthmore.edu/makers/
- Purevoice: http://www.cdmatech.com/solutions/products/purevoice_download.html
- Movie Maker (Windows): http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/moviemaker/default.asp
- iMovie (MacIntosh): http://www.apple.com/imovie/

Greg Kessler teaches in the Ohio Program of Intensive English (OPIE) at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He manages OPIE's use of a self-access computer lab and develops distance programs. He is currently chair-elect of TESOL's CALL Interest Section.

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Richard Firsten

The Grammar Guy

That's It!

Dear Grammar Guy: What is the difference between the usage of *it* and *that*? While editing my students' papers, sometimes they use *that* at the beginning of sentences when it should be *it* and *it* in the middle of sentences when it should be *that*. When I try to explain why it doesn't sound right and how they should use these words, I can't come up with a sufficient explanation. What should I tell them? Here are some examples from my students' writing:

(1) I personally think that language is one of the reasons that Patrick and I have misunderstandings because English is not my first language. I actually have to ask him many things like, "What does **it** mean?" (I thought it should be *that*.)

(2) **That** is not always right to expect people to act on every suggestion you give them; they can choose to go with your suggestion or not. (I thought it should be *it*.)

—Adrianne Ochoa, Atlanta, GA

Hi, Adrianne: The problem has to do with a neat part of language called deixis, which deals with the "nearness" or "farness" of things in relation to the speaker or writer. It can be seen in concrete ways, such as when we teach the difference between *this* and *that*, with *this* meaning something relatively close to the speaker and *that* meaning something relatively far away. In abstract ways, deixis comes into play, too. We use *it* when referring to something that stands alone, something not previously referred to. We use *that* when referring to something previously mentioned. My students, even at a low intermediate level, don't usually have a problem understanding this concept. Here's an example of how both words work:

A: It's not winning a war which may be so hard, but maintaining the peace after the fighting has stopped.

B: That's a very interesting point.

In the example above, Person A uses *it*, the "anticipatory *it*," to start off his idea. It's a new idea and there's no previous reference point. Person B, however, is referring to what Person A has said and uses *that* to do so.

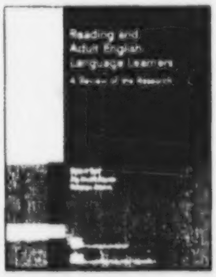
Keep the explanation simple and give lots of examples to back it up. Go back and check out the examples of their writing you sent, and you'll see why you wanted to change *that* to *it* and *it* to *that*!

Here's my "Food for Thought" question from the last issue: Is the following italicized phrase "acceptable" English?: "*The guy who won the lottery's* relatives are all hitting him up for loans." Stephen Berkowitz of Haifa, Israel had this to say: This is one of my favorite oddities in English! It's called a group genitive, I believe, and is perfectly acceptable in informal, conversational English. In fact, I remember as a kid growing up with early TV back in the States that Gracie Allen of the comedy team of Burns and Allen used to crack the audiences up with her amazingly long group genitives. Of course, in more formal English we would say, "The relatives of the guy who won the lottery"—but that's not nearly as much fun!

Good for you, Stephen! Yes, it's a group genitive, and I agree that group genitives are lots of fun!

And here's the "Food for Thought" question for this issue: You go to school, you go to church, you go to bed. Why don't you go to *the* school, go to *the* church, or go to *the* bed? You can say, "The school/church I go to is five blocks away," right? So what's going on with the definite article, or lack of it? Please send in your answers as soon as possible. As always, I love hearing from you!

Richard Firsten is an ESL instructor, teacher trainer and author specializing in grammar and methodology. He currently teaches at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center in Miami, Florida. Reach him at ESLGrammarGuy@aol.com.



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Developing Listening Skills with Authentic Materials

BY LINDSAY MILLER

For too long listening has been relegated to a secondary position in the English language teaching classroom. This stems, in part, from the fact that whereas a considerable amount of research has been conducted into reading, writing and speaking—research which has influenced our approaches to teaching language and has also influenced how textbooks have been written (see sidebar)—there has been a lack of research interest into listening. Some of the reasons for this lack of research interest come from the fact that speaking was always considered a more "valuable" skill to focus on in the classroom; that researchers and teachers have often considered that listening was something which could just be "picked up"; and as researchers and teachers had not been taught listening themselves, they saw little need for developing a specific research agenda or approaches to teaching listening.

It is indeed interesting that listening has not received wider attention in the past given that it is the language skill most often used in everyday life. More than forty percent of our daily communication time is spent on listening, thirty-five percent on speaking, sixteen percent on reading, and only nine percent on writing (Burely-Allen 1995).

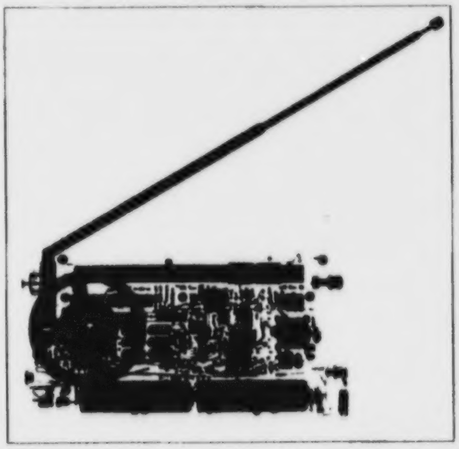
Although listening has been a relatively neglected skill in terms of research and how it is introduced to language learners, it is now beginning to receive more attention. In the past few years we have seen the publication of several major texts, both practical and theoretical, specifically dealing with listening skills: Mendelson and Rubin 1995; Nunan and Miller 1995; Buck 2000; Rost 2002; Flowerdew and Miller, in press. In conjunction with these books, there is now a greater awareness among teachers that we have to help learners develop their listening skills, rather than rely on the skill developing itself.

The question of how to help learners develop effective listening skills brings attention to the methods we use and the type of materials we introduce our learners to. The aim of all listening lessons should be to allow learners a greater degree of independence when confronted with listening to the foreign language in a real world context, and that means using authentic texts. Authentic texts are any spoken texts which have not been specially prepared for language learners, and they are often delivered via technologies like radio, television/video, and the Internet or CD-ROM.

In the rest of this article I would like to suggest a process for helping learners develop their listening skills, and make suggestions as how this might be achieved with authentic materials.

Pre-, While-, and Post-Listening

One of the main advancements to come out of research into listening strategies was the understanding that listening exercises could be divided into three main parts: Pre-listening, While-listening, Post-listening activities. This format has proved useful in taking the attention off continually testing listening and has allowed learners to do other things with the information that they listen to. For instance, a teacher can initiate a short discussion with the learners in the pre-listening stage as to what they think of the topic before they listen to the text (activating world and personal knowledge). Then the learners can be asked to use whatever information they gathered from a text to have an extended discussion in a post-listening stage (allowing for more individualization and critical comments to be developed). In between these two stages, learners can be helped to focus on their listening by careful selection of tasks that are meaningful and that cater to developing specific listening skills rather than on constantly measuring performance through test-like exercises.



I will use this established format of pre-, while-, and post-listening activities and make some suggestions as to how they can be used with authentic materials delivered through technological media.

Radio

Using real-time radio in class is one of the more easily accessible forms of authentic listening practice we can give our learners. The airwaves are filled with programs twenty-four hours per day, and the low cost of radios means that most language teachers can obtain a radio and take it to class. Radio stations such as BBC World Service (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA) are constantly on-air. Meanwhile, many non-English speaking countries also broadcast some programs, or even have dedicated stations, in English. Although radios are easy to access, they are perhaps the most difficult of aural text for language learners to listen to. The reason for this is that all non-verbal information is missing, information which can aid in helping understand the message, and the learner has to focus on the skill which is most difficult for him or her—listening.

In order to use radio programs with learners teachers need to select a program at a suitable time for their class and decide on some global listening tasks for the learners. For instance, with an intermediate group of learners about to listen to a radio program on travel we might adopt the following procedure:

Stage 1: Pre-Listening Task

Today we are going to listen to a travel program on the radio for ten minutes. Before we listen, who has made a trip recently? Where did you go? What did you see?

The radio guide tells us in that this program is about Egypt. What do you know about Egypt? What would you like to know about Egypt? What kind of information do you think the presenter will give us?

Stage 2: While-Listening Task

While you listen to the program, try to listen for the main things the presenter recommends doing while in Egypt. Don't try to write anything down, only listen to the program and see how much you can understand.

Stage 3: Post-Listening Task
In groups of three have a short discussion about what you heard from the program. Would you like to go to Egypt based on what you just heard? Why or why not?

In using the radio in the way suggested here we allow learners access to native speaker models, something which might be missing from their normal classroom experiences. Also, we place the focus on extensive listening for pleasure and take the emphasis off testing what the learners hear (that is why we ask the learners not to write while they listen).

TV/Video

Using television or videos in the classroom allows the learners access to more information when listening. That is, the learners can now see what is happening as well as listen to the text. Non-verbal behavior or paralinguistic features of the spoken text are now available to the learners (compared with radio, that is), so learners can develop their listening skills in a richer language context.

Many language learners watch movies outside of class time, but few of them consider this as an opportunity to develop their listening skills (perhaps because they become used to reading the sub-titles of English movies). Going to a movie is considered as entertainment and often "doesn't count" in terms of learning. We can, however, in the language classroom, sensitize our learners to how they can make use of movies to help them develop their second language listening skills. With an elementary-level class of learners we might consider the following out-of-class activity:

Stage 1: Pre-Viewing Task
This weekend there is an English movie on TV. Does anyone know what it is? What time is it on? Which channel is it on? Please write the name, time and channel down as this is your homework task.

Stage 2: While-Viewing Task
I would like you to watch the movie this weekend, or try to watch as much as you can. Focus on listening to the movie instead of reading the subtitles. Try to collect the following information: kind of movie (comedy, romance, action, horror), names of the main characters (male, female, animal), where does the movie take place (inside, outside, on land, at sea, country), what is the main idea in the movie?

Stage 3: Post-Viewing Task (the next lesson) Who watched the movie last weekend? What can you tell us about it?

This generic format can be repeated as many times as you like, and once learners have developed the habit of watching and listening to English language movies with some kind of focus, they will get used to this type of exposure to listening for pleasure, and you may then move on to more critical post-viewing tasks—e.g., Do you think we should go to war with each other (after viewing a war movie).

The Internet/CD-ROM

There has been a rapid increase in the development of Internet facilities and CD-ROMs. This has been prompted, partly, by the more powerful computers we have these days and has been partly driven by the users' demands for more interesting and innovative applications of the technology. We are able to direct our learners to sites on the Internet where they can practice their listening as long as they have access to the appropriate computer hardware.

There are several benefits computer software has over radio or television. For instance, many CD-ROMs now have glossaries and online scripts, so that when problems are encountered, the learners can get online help. In addition to this, many younger learners wish to learn or use their computer skills nowadays, so the prospect of developing computer skills along with developing their language skills may seem attractive to these learners. With an advanced group of learners we might consider having extended critical and creative discussion about the news:

Stage 1: Pre-Listening Task
Tomorrow in class we will have some discussion about what's in the news. In order to do this I would like you do access at least two of the following websites:

The Question of Authenticity

When preparing learners for academic listening, English language teachers often choose to use a textbook with a title like *Academic listening: preparing students for lectures*. Such textbooks are widely used on pre-sessional courses, and many students and their teachers diligently work their way through the textbook in the belief that they are preparing for the real thing. However, my colleague John Flowerdew and I conducted an investigation of an authentic economics and finance lecture (Flowerdew and Miller, 1997). We found that what academic listening textbooks prepared learners for was very different from the "real thing." We transcribed and analyzed a lecture discourse and then compared it to a selection of academic listening textbooks, this is what we found:

1. The authentic lecture was structured at the micro-level of discourse. There were lots of uses of "and," "so," "but," many pauses, and filled pauses with the use of "ah" and "er." On the other hand, textbook lectures had complete clauses and fewer pauses.
2. The authentic lecture discourse contained many false starts, redundancies and repetitions. None of these show up in English language teaching (ELT) textbooks.
3. The lecturer made use of a variety of extra linguistic features such as body movements and kinesics. Textbook texts are usually only audio recorded so such cues are missing.
4. In the real lecture the lecturer made an attempt to establish a rapport with the students; he a) tried to make the lecture non-threatening and empathized with the students, b) personalized many of his references, and c) checked that the students were following the lecture as he delivered it. The impersonal nature of an audio text cannot simulate any of these features.
5. As the authentic lecture lasted for two hours, the lecturer made use of a narrative thread to hold his talk together, that is, he told a story and continually returned to the theme of the story. ELT textbooks, on the other hand, rarely have recordings of more than a few minutes and cannot sustain any narrative thread.
6. The lecturer made use of macro-markers to signpost his way through the talk and to refer to future lectures, e.g., "Last week we saw how....." "In next week's lecture I am going to move on to.....". In this way he structured the lecture around the series of talks he was going to give to the students. Textbooks cannot do this as most of their texts are stand-alone lectures.
7. The lecturer made use of a variety of visual aids during his talk including the white board, overhead transparencies and pre-lecture reading text. None of these were used in the textbooks analyzed.

This detailed lecture analysis illustrates that authentic texts should also be used when helping learners prepare for listening to lectures. By only using specially scripted text, learners may miss important features of spoken academic discourse and develop listening skills which will be of little use to them in the real lecture context.

http://www.bbc.co.uk, http://www.avoa.gov or http://npr.org (National Public Radio) and listen to different versions of the main stories.

Once you are in the website you can choose audio or video presentations. You can also look for related items. Just surf around until you feel you have collected enough information for our discussion in class.

Stage 2: While-Listening Task
Students may either work at home or in a computer lab at school to collect the information they require.

Stage 3: Post-Listening Task (the next class)
First I would like you to sit in groups according to one of the websites you visited. So lets have a group of BBC listeners/viewers, one of VOA, and one of NPR to begin with. In your groups discuss what the main news stories were. Only exchange information at this stage.

Now change groups and have one person for each website in groups of three. Explain to the other members in your group the main stories in the order they were presented on the Web. Then discuss your reaction to these stories. Consider how important you think the item is, what angle the broadcast company took when presenting the stories, and what this story means to you personally.

ESL Magazine's Online Poll

What medium do you use most often to obtain authentic listening material for ESL/EFL instruction?

35%	TV
11%	radio
14%	films
31%	Internet
9%	other

www.eslmag.com

This use of the Internet and computer technology integrates several authentic activities for the learners and widens the scope of developing listening skills. In addition to this, learners are now given more autonomy over their language learning and the links between classroom and real-world learning becomes more obvious to them.

Richer Learning Experiences

With the increased awareness of the need to help second-language learners develop effective listening skills and with the greater availability of technology nowadays, teachers are able to explore more creative ways of teaching listening in and out of the class using authentic materials. Once we begin to explore the possibilities, a few of which are outlined here, we offer a richer language learning experience for our learners and create good listeners into the bargain.

Lindsay Miller is an associate professor of language education in the Department of English and Communication at the City University of Hong Kong.

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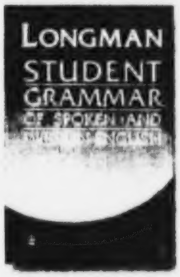
Pioneering Volume Teaches Grammar and Analytical Skills

BY FRANCISCO GOMES DE MATOS

Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English, and Workbook
by Douglas Biber, Susan Conrad and Geoffrey Leech
Pearson Education, 2002

In 1999, a breakthrough took place in the history of English language grammars: the publication of the 1,204-page *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LGSWE), written by a team of five researchers under the direction of U.S. linguist Douglas Biber. This reference work is based on a corpus of almost 40 million words and is pioneering in its coverage of four registers of English: conversation, fiction writing, academic prose and news writing. Significantly, the core volume has given birth to two useful grammar books designed for advanced students, their teachers and teacher educators/trainers: a 487-page *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* and a 140-page *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English Workbook*, both by Douglas Biber, Susan Conrad and Geoffrey Leech.



The Student Grammar

The preface to the *Student Grammar* tells us that it is "more than just an abbreviated LGSWE," since the contents have been considerably simplified and reorganized, with the addition of new and simpler extracts from the corpus data. In its introductory section, the coursebook/reference grammar provides a list of grammatical abbreviations and symbols and of typographic conventions used within examples. There are 13 chapters, a seven-page glossary of terms, a two-page A to Z list of irregular verbs and a 23-page index. Innovatively, there is an introductory index of the "Grammar Bites" in each chapter, which summarizes the grammar content.

The introductory chapter, "A Discourse Perspective on Grammar," is followed by two chapters on key concepts and categories in English grammar, four chapters on the major phrase types, one chapter on clause grammar, four chapters on building the clause and one chapter on the grammar of conversation. Chapters feature from two to six "Grammar Bites" and their respective reviews. There is an abundance of figures (e.g., Frequency of perfect and progressive aspect in American English versus British English conversation and news, p. 158), tables (e.g., A survey of conversational inserts, p. 450-453), and sections of text presenting corpus patterns (e.g., The use of fronting across registers, p. 405)

Given the *Student Grammar*'s emphasis on the needs of high-proficiency learners/teachers of English, I looked for the kinds of advanced grammatical information that could enhance my own grammatical knowledge as a non-native user: The choice between genitives and of- phrases, semantic categories of lexical verbs, personal and logical meanings of modals, adjectival compounds, degree adverbs, meaning relationships expressed by noun + noun sequences, semantic categories of stance adverbials, the discourse circumstances of conversation, and performance phenomena in conversation. The 320-entry glossary features traditional terms (e.g., auxiliary verb, ellipsis, relative clause) and linguistics-inspired terminology (e.g., backchannel, end-weight, information flow, conversational repair, speech act). Interestingly, the authors opt for register and dialect in their description of language varieties. Thus they speak of four main registers—conversation, fiction, news, academic prose—and refer to American English and British English as dialects (national varieties). Typographically, the *Student Grammar* promotes processing ease: the print is most readable and bold type highlights main elements.

The Student Grammar Workbook

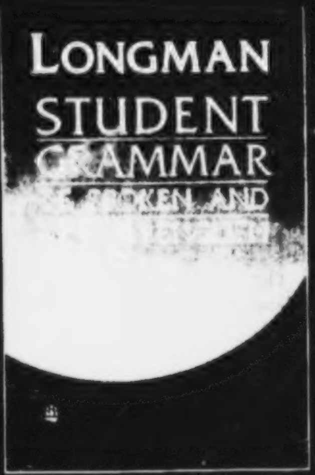
The *Workbook* is a novel contribution to the tradition of companion workbooks, which have been productive in related areas (e.g., in linguistics) but have been somewhat underexplored in the area of reference/pedagogical ESL/EFL grammars. The *Workbook* merits a longer discussion, but space limitations make me opt instead for pointing out what have struck me as interesting, innovative exercises. For teachers interested in typologies of classroom practices, I suggest that a compilation be made of the key verbs used for each activity. Such a listing would include *analyze, categorize, circle, compare, complete, count, create, decide, describe, discuss, distinguish, explain, express, fill-in-the-blank* (a rare example on p. 88), *find, identify, justify, label, match, reconstruct, rewrite, suggest, underline* and *use*. The wealth of exercises—many inspired by the corpus-based-approach—and the varying degrees of cognitive-linguistic challenge posed by such use-focused practice is but one of the virtues of this tool, aimed at helping users learn how to analyze English grammar while at the same time advancing their proficiency in the language.

Another praiseworthy feature in the *Workbook* is the 30-page Answers to Exercises. Sociolinguistically-oriented instructors will welcome such key concepts as "informal usage." Given the challenging nature of many of the exercises, several of them have multiple solutions. Accordingly, the *Workbook* provides only some possible answers, leaving it to users to create other answers.

Innovatively, the first unit features three self-tests: A Discourse Perspective on Grammar, Standard and Non-standard English and How to Interpret Frequency Information Given in the Student Grammar. Among the contrastive exercises, the one on comparing natural and fictional conversations is an insightful example of how to challenge advanced users of English to look systematically at linguistic and functional characteristics in a text sample.

The *Workbook* was classroom-tested in a U.S. context—Northern Arizona University—and should be tested in other ESL/EFL environments so that its dual benefits (development of analytical competence and language performance) can be assessed on the basis of a larger sample of advanced students, their teachers and, if possible, teacher-educators/trainers.

Francisco Gomes de Matos teaches at the Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil. He is currently president of the Board of Trustees, Associação Brasil América, a local binational center. He may be reached at fcgm@hotlink.com.br.



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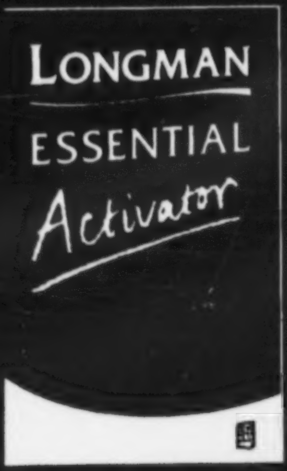

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Bring the Community into the Classroom

BY KATHLEEN OLSON

In a soon-to-be-published five year study of what works in adult ESL (American Institutes for Research forthcoming), researchers found that one significant factor which makes a difference in the acquisition of English language skills is the degree to which the teacher brings the community into the classroom and the degree to which the classroom goes into the community. The development of English language skills is of little use if students are not able to get out of the classroom and apply those skills in their immediate and broader communities. The goal of developing English language skills in the classroom is for learners to use those skills to access services and function successfully in their homes, workplaces and communities. Comfort with the community and community involvement can and should begin in the classroom.

Why Bring the Community into the Classroom?

Bringing the community into the classroom is an alternative to taking students on field trips into the community. Most instructors would agree that taking adult ESL students on field trips is a valuable learning experience. Learning in an authentic context is considered to be advantageous, and field trips into the community can facilitate the transfer of classroom learning to actual situations.

A number of factors, however, make it difficult for many programs to plan and take class trips with adult students. First of all, field trips do not always coincide with class times, so students may have scheduling conflicts with work, child care or other responsibilities. Many field trips have costs, which must be paid the students or absorbed by the program. There is also the belief on the part of some students that they are not learning English on field trips. Many students believe that if there is no textbook or classroom instruction involved, learning must not be taking place. Transportation is often a problem as many students do not have cars and come to class with others or by bus. Most programs and schools have strict travel policies that regulate the times, distances traveled and types of transportation allowed. In addition, students come to class with differing prior knowledge, differing needs and interests. A field trip that is new and interesting for one portion of the class may be familiar to another portion of the class, or a field trip that is appropriate for a beginning level student may not be appropriate for others in the classroom.

Ways to Bring the Community into the Classroom

Because of all the obstacles to overcome in taking the classroom into the community, many teachers are reluctant to schedule field trips. It is often more convenient for the teacher to arrange to bring the community into the classroom through a variety of different activities. If these activities are done well, students will be able to experience much of the value of field trips without all the associated problems.

Inviting guest speakers is one of the many ways to bring the community into the classroom.

Guest Speakers

Inviting guests to speak to the class is probably the first thing most instructors think of when considering ways of bringing the community into the classroom. But students can benefit in many other ways when community members come into the classroom. In addition to speeches, classroom visitors can share their experiences and expertise with students through activities, projects and discussions. Volunteers and guests may come into the classroom to coach or critique, support or assist with a variety of topics. They may provide sheltered interactions. For example, business people may conduct mock job interviews with students or may be available for students to interview. The students themselves can be guest speakers who present information on their jobs or they may invite a coworker or boss to talk to the class.

Volunteers and guests come from and represent the community. As such, they are valuable assets to make use of in the classroom. Involving volunteers in ESL instruction is a way to educate and enrich members of the local community as well as offer the ESL students direct contact and increasing comfort with members of their communities. Oftentimes, this becomes the language learner's first opportunity to develop a relationship with a native-speaking community member.

Videotapes and Brochures

When field trips are not possible, teachers can contact museums, historic societies, and other community, state and national organizations for free and inexpensive instructional materials (e.g., videos, CD-ROMs, and printed materials). Videos can be obtained for tourist attractions such as national parks, colleges and universities, and many community points of interest. Videotapes featuring life in the United States can be used to teach students about U.S. culture, making them feel more comfortable when experiencing cultural events in the community. Teachers can produce videos on expeditions both near and far so that students may experience these trips in the classroom.

Virtual Tours/Visits

A virtual field trip or virtual tour uses the Internet to enable students to visit places such as NASA, the Statue of Liberty, a Krispy Kreme donut bakery, and the U.S. Senate without leaving the classroom. Virtual tours enable students to visit tourist attractions, community services, government agencies, factories and shops or workplaces and job situations through a classroom computer.

Virtual visits differ from virtual tours in that they are webpages made by actual visitors to field trip sites. Virtual visits reflect the point of view and abilities of the persons making the video, and as such they may vary in quality and may not represent the views of the site itself.

Both virtual visits and virtual tours enable students to see and experience places via the Web. Students can take trips which might not otherwise be possible for them, or they can get information and gain experience that will help them in the future. A virtual tour of a doctor's office, for example, can be the first step in developing the language and comfort necessary to visit in person.

Media Resources

Local radio, television and newspapers as well as online newspapers and radio programs can be used to bring local, national and international current events into the classroom. Newspapers in Education (NIE) provides newspapers with educational support programs including lesson plans and resources. NIE is a non-profit program funded by individual newspapers and community sponsors. A classroom supply of local newspapers is distributed to area schools one day each week for no or minimal cost. The newspapers contain supplements with suggested activities for their use. The activities connect the newspaper topics to real-life community situations. NIE online (http://nieonline.com/) provides newspapers, learning programs and online activities to classrooms to help foster real-world learning by bringing the world into the classroom.

National Public Radio (NPR) (http://www.npr.org/) offers audio clips, transcriptions and discussions of various topics for classroom use. Free lesson plans, professional development materials and more can also be found at the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) website (http://www.pbs.org/). These sources allow teachers to bring authentic material on community issues into the classroom.

Other Internet Resources

Email, electronic lists (listservs) and online chats give students the opportunity to communicate with people and services in the local community and beyond. Teachers can help identify a network of people active in community organizations who could be available for email interviews. This increased electronic access to the world around them increases students' social awareness and confidence in their ability to use English. Students can be empowered by their ability to communicate their concerns with local, state and national government officials. They can get to know and feel comfortable with people and places from the safe distance of a classroom computer. Free email is available from Yahoo! Mail at http://mail.yahoo.com/?.intl=us or from Hotmail at hotmail.com. By going to http://www.askanexpert.com/learners can email their questions to professionals such as dentists, doctors, immigration experts and police officers. They can also use email to find out about careers, submit résumés, join local support groups, or link with their communities in many other ways.

The Web can be a valuable source of local information. Learners can find out about weather conditions, entertainment or employment opportunities. They can use it for making travel reservations or for reserving books at the local library. All of these activities increase the students' familiarity and comfort with the services and the language of the services in their communities. These activities will encourage students to try out their newly developing language skills in person in their communities.

Cameras

Any kind of camera can be used to bring the community into the classroom. Disposable cameras are an inexpensive way of supplying cameras to students, but someone has to pay for developing the pictures. Digital cameras cost more but there's no cost for developing the pictures since they are downloaded onto a computer. Instructors can take pictures of community events or area locations and use them for activities in the classroom. Pictures on the computer are convenient writing prompts. Students can use cameras outside of the classroom to document what is important in their lives at work, at home and in the community. Learners can proudly share their outside lives with the class, which helps develop their self-esteem. As students share pictures of their favorite grocery store or workplace, the community becomes less threatening and more personal to the students. This in turn helps the students develop a sense of pride and a feeling of belonging to the community.

Learners can also take photographs that highlight community issues that are important to them such as trash strewn about the neighborhood, a local polluted stream, or a car speeding through the neighborhood. Classroom discussions can then be held as to how these issues affect life in the community and what students can do to work towards changing the problem. Letters can be written to community officials or students might investigate a local clean-up activity. These are good first steps towards community involvement.

Realia

Print materials found in the community make excellent classroom resources. These could include flyers, inserts, labels, signs, job or credit applications, traffic tickets, school information or mailbox items such as messages from the INS, bills or junk mail. A pharmacy flyer might lead

Virtual Tours and Visits

The Web sites below are virtual tours which may be of interest to adult learners, but were not made by them.

- **Grocery store virtual tour** of a where learners can visit different departments and find out about products available. http://interactive. colum.edu/eatit/grocery.html
- **Domestic violence shelter tour** and stories about domestic violence from victims who have sought safety in shelters. http://www.dvsheltertour.org/
- **Virtual Tours**—an extensive collection of links to tours of museums, exhibits, places of interest and U.S. Government tour sites. http://www.virtualfreesites.com/tours.html
- **Jelly Belly and Hershey's virtual factory tours** via Prentice Hall's companion site http://myphliputil.pearsoncmg.com/student/bp_russell_opsmgmt_4/vtch01.html
- **Virtual beauty salon** allows students to use a given face or upload their face to try out different hair styles and colors. http://www.women.com/style/beauty/pages/0,12701,265717_289604,00.html

The following websites were created by ESL students.

- **How to Buy My First House: Homebuying Readiness Virtual Visits** http://www2.wgbh.org/MBCWEIS/ltc/Housing/HousingHome.html
- **Homebuying for Everyone** http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/ltc/final/vvhome.html
- **Virtual Visit to the Adult Literacy Resource Institute Library in Boston** http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/ltc/LibraryVisit/ALRILibraryVV.html
- **Visiting May Wu—a Virtual Visit for Healthcare Information in Boston's Chinatown** http://www.gis.net/~qsccbcnc/MayVisit.html
- **Virtual Visit to a Goodwill Computer Store** http://www.geocities.com/a9421243/

to the creation of a "Pharmacy Flyer Scavenger Hunt" where students use the flyers to find products. This could lead to more community interaction as learners become more familiar with services and products available in the neighborhood.

Posters, Bulletin Boards, Displays

The content of student newsletters and bulletin boards can be used to encourage students to discover a variety of cultural and community issues. Many communities have special holidays, foods and activities. Displays can be made of upcoming events in the community, including parades, fairs and arts and craft shows. Students will gain interest in the events and familiarity with what to expect through these visuals.

Special Events

ESL or adult education programs can host special events to encourage the community to join with their classes. Some suggestions are game nights, popcorn and movie nights, cultural displays, or on-site dinners for elderly or homeless people.

Students can work in the classroom on a community action project to help others in need or to make life a little brighter for others in the community or beyond. One way for classes to reach out might involve finding community partners, agencies in the community such as churches or local ethnic or community-based organizations that would be interested in collaborating with the students to produce newsletters, assemble products, write letters or do other projects to link the class with community issues and needs.

All of these activities allow students to connect what is being learned in the classroom to life outside the classroom. These activities make students more comfortable with the challenges they face in becoming active members of their communities.

Kathleen Olson is the ESOL training and support specialist for the Northeast Adult Basic and Literacy Education (NE ABLE) Resource Center.

REFERENCES

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Suggested Guest Speakers:

- Successful past students
- Immigrants who have pursued various training opportunities or have achieved their desired occupations
- Government workers at all levels
- Health care workers
- Legal system workers
- Performing artists/authors
- Animal shelter worker
- Students' coworkers or employers
- Law enforcement workers
- Fireman, EMT
- Teacher of the deaf
- Auto mechanic
- Skin care/hair care professional
- Military recruit
- ESL program director
- Weatherman
- Chef

Representatives from:

- Employment agencies
- Volunteer organizations
- Local community colleges and universities
- Local chambers of commerce, industry councils
- Forest service (Smokey Bear)
- Service organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Red Cross (disaster preparation)
- Local businesses

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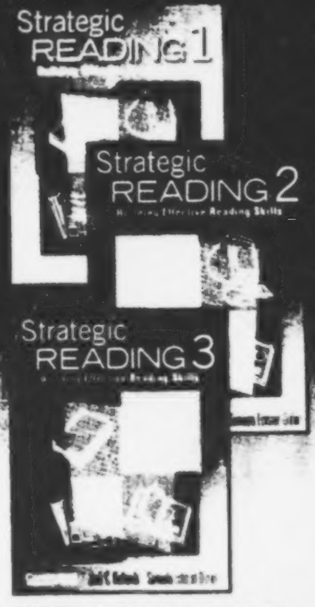

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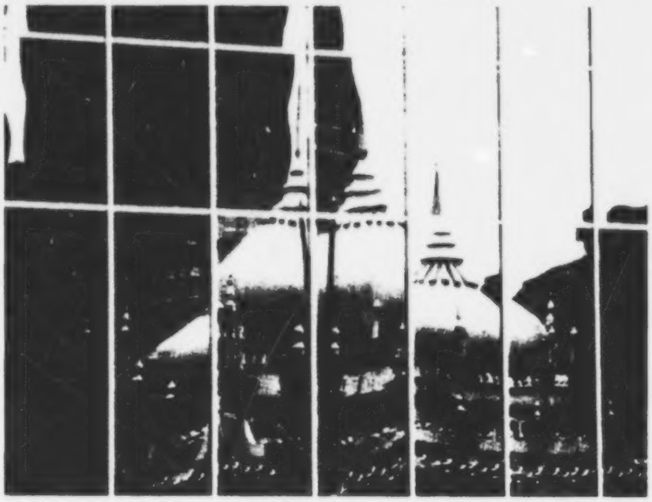
Malaysia Promotes Excellence in English

BY VINODINI MURUGESAN

English is one legacy of more than a century's worth of British colonial rule in Malaysia. It is the most important foreign language in Malaysia and is used extensively in practically all aspects of daily life, from conducting business transactions to labeling products to writing jingles for television advertisements. English and the official language of Malaysia, Bahasa Malaysia, both play a vital role in binding together a multicultural nation made up largely of three separate and distinct races—the Malay, the Chinese and the Indians. These groups differ in both appearance and mother tongue and rely on one or both of these shared languages to communicate outside their ethnic groups (in some cases even within them). English and Bahasa Malaysia help unite people and create a unique national consciousness.



The Role of English in Malaysia

The importance of the English language as a global lingua franca has always been a major motivating factor in the learning and use of the language in Malaysia, especially as a vehicle to gain information in science and technology. Also, as a member of the world order increasingly embracing globalization via the Internet and the Information Age, Malaysia is aware of the vital need to be literate in English in order to access the wealth of data available and achieve a reasonable measure of success and stature in trade and industry.

Despite its history, Malaysia has recently seen a sharp decline in English language proficiency, which has provoked the implementation of certain measures calculated to check this and prevent its recurrence. The decline is largely due to a backwash effect from a change implemented in the early 1960s and 1970s when Bahasa Malaysia replaced English as the medium of instruction in schools and as the language used for official matters. In the early days of Malaysia's independence, it was necessary for this fledgling multiracial and multicultural nation to establish an official language to manifest and reinforce its sovereignty. Today, however, Bahasa Malaysia is solidly and irrevocably established as the official language of Malaysia, thus clearing the way for a new emphasis on the importance of English without posing a threat to the status of the official language in any way. The government has issued a nationwide exhortation to the people to achieve a high standard of proficiency in English, providing incentives and encouragement in various forms.

As the primary foreign language in Malaysia (often labeled "second language" due to its importance and not always from a strictly pedagogic perspective), English is evident everywhere. Most people use it—or a uniquely Malaysian colloquial form of it called Malaysian English or "Manglish"—to hold ordinary conversations, give ordinary directions or make ordinary remarks.

Local television channels screen a wide variety of English cartoons, serials, dramas and films in the original language, often subtitled in Bahasa Malaysia, while cinemas usually add Chinese and Tamil subtitles to English movie releases as well. A few English language films and sitcoms have also been written and produced locally, featuring local actors, and these have been quite successful. No English language entertainment import is ever dubbed; this treatment is usually reserved for Japanese, Korean or Latin American soap operas. A good proportion of local radio stations broadcast exclusively in English, and these are very popular with the Malaysian public.

English in Education

Malaysian students usually receive English instruction in two distinct ways. Most of them attend the public English language education system in government schools during the day, and depending on need, background and preference, receive instruction from either private language centers or qualified freelance teachers in the evenings. Of course, some students exclusively attend private schools where English is the language of instruction.

English is a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary school, and is generally taught in mainstream public schools from the first year of school until the last (eleven years in all). There are usually five periods of English in a week, totaling up to 200 minutes or roughly three and a half hours.

There are three major examinations throughout the school years, all of which feature English as a core paper. The first is at the end of primary school in Year Six (UPSR or Primary School Evaluation Certificate), the second at the end of lower secondary in Form Three (PMR or Lower Secondary School Certificate), and the third at the end of upper secondary in Form Five (SPM or Malaysian School Certificate). After taking this last exam, students may choose to enter Form Six, which is comprised of two years' work and leads to the STPM examination (the Higher Malaysian School Certificate), and thenceforward on to university. Other options include continuing education at private colleges or entering one of the many post-school matriculation programs available according to interest.

Competence in English is highly prized whatever the field of interest, and students are aware that getting a good grade in English greatly increases the chances of acceptance at both local and foreign universities as well as providing a coveted edge in the workplace.

In addition to mainstream public primary schools, Malaysia has a substantial number of vernacular primary schools in which lessons are conducted using either Chinese or Tamil as the medium of instruction. In these schools, one hour of English must be taught per week at the very minimum, beginning in Year Four through to Year Six. (From 2003 onwards, however, English lessons will begin in Year One.) Schools are given autonomy to decide if they will only fulfill this minimum or allot more time to English. There are no vernacular secondary schools, however, and students must fulfill an extra year of school focusing on an intensive study of both Bahasa Malaysia and English before they are integrated into a mainstream secondary school. This year of transition between primary and secondary education is called the Remove Form and is compulsory for all students of vernacular primary schools.

Some years ago, basic requirements for a passing grade in both the PMR and SPM were upgraded, as were the papers themselves, in an effort to redress the plummeting standards of English. The SPM 322 examination was conjoined with the Cambridge 1119 "O" Level paper to produce a hybrid which was altogether far more challenging than the old model. A few years later, a literature component was added to both papers, including a carefully selected range of poetry and prose to further jumpstart student interest in the language. The SPM English examination incorporating this component made its debut in 2000 while the PMR paper did so in 2002. Students were, of course, given two years to prepare themselves for the new element in the language paper. Teachers attended in-service courses organized by the Education Ministry to help them cope with the change in examination format and to ground them in the basics of understanding and teaching literature.

Up to 2002, the SPM examination had an oral examination component which was graded based on the candidate's comprehension of a dialogue and ability to respond to pictorial stimuli. However, this test was found to be woefully inadequate since students' proficiency in speaking English continued to drop to the point where prospective employers in both government and private sectors complained about the inability of graduates to converse in even the most rudimentary situations. This year, a new oral exam was designed and implemented, aimed at truly improving students' verbal skills by continuous assessment over a period of two years rather than a single test, in which the examiners are the students' English teachers at their own schools. Students are given a choice of what form their oral test takes (i.e., individual presentation, group discussion, dialogue, etc.) and they are allowed to take the tests as often as they wish to in order to gain a better score. It is hoped that this will prove more practical than the previous oral exam and provide a growing Malaysian workforce with at least basic English speaking skills.

Recently, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to implement a radical step to improve the standard of English in Malaysia—i.e., shifting the medium of instruction for the subjects of science and mathematics back to English. The change is to take place gradually over the next few years, implemented in a carefully planned "staggered" way to allow time for students and teachers to fully adjust to the change before the national examinations are officially held in English for these two core subjects. The rationale behind this rather controversial (but potentially extremely effective) method is that students will learn English while gaining knowledge in science and mathematics, thus providing a much greater exposure to English as a language as compared to merely learning it as one subject with limited class time. This will also prevent students from compartmentalizing English as an unnecessary or too-difficult subject (which often happens in rural schools with limited exposure to the language) as well as prevent students from taking English lightly since their academic performance will be severely jeopardized if they do not master the actual science and mathematics subject matter. Also, the creation of a new generation of graduates who are fluent in English not only as a communicative device but as a technical and scientific tool will greatly facilitate Malaysia's aim of becoming a fully industrialized nation by the year 2020.

The Students

By the time English lessons are formally taught in public schools, most pupils are reasonably proficient in their first languages, which influences their learning of English in either a positive or a negative way. First language interference is to be expected in such a melting pot of languages and cultures, and teachers must be prepared to select and utilize the best teaching approaches to negate or counteract it.

In general, location and background play an important part in determining students' attitudes towards English. Urban pupils have more exposure to the language as well as more opportunities to use it. In fact, there are a growing number of children whose first language is English and who may be termed native speakers since their parents have chosen to use only English in the home instead of their ethnic languages. Children living in rural areas tend to have little exposure to English except whatever is available through the radio or television, and so tend to be more negative towards learning the language.

These differences in background result in mixed-ability groups in the English language classroom, with students ranging from highly proficient to complete beginners. Classes are not streamed according to levels of English proficiency, so teachers have to deal with the range of abilities as best they can. Class sizes average 40 students per class, although the figure can drop to as low as 35 or rise to as high as 45.

The Teachers

Most of the English teachers in the Malaysian public school system are graduates of government universities or teacher training institutes, which offer a wide range of courses from English language and linguistics to TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) to English literature degrees. Many university graduates from other fields like science and geography as well as English language graduates with B.A.s instead of B.Ed.s enter the teaching profession after completing a post-degree teaching certificate in a teacher-training college. The government has also conducted scholarship programs for twin degrees between local teacher training institutes and foreign universities in Britain and New Zealand in an effort to maintain an adequate number of fully qualified ESL teachers with a correspondingly high standard of the language.

English language teaching methodology is exhaustively covered as part of B.Ed. degree requirements, together with a plethora of related skills like educational theory, linguistics, phonetics and teaching techniques. Although short practical teaching stints are interspersed regularly throughout the course, a final three-month teaching practicum is conducted at the end of the academic session, and a reasonably high grade in this component is essential before the degree can be awarded. This provides the student-teacher with an invaluable hands-on experience with English language teaching, so that both pedagogic theory and practical teaching guidelines can be optimally merged in the language classroom.

The Classroom and Syllabus

Malaysian public school students usually stay in a classroom, and subject teachers move between the classes, except in certain subjects like science or living skills which may require laboratory facilities. Most classrooms have notice boards along the walls where the language teacher can put up any charts or visual aids, and the students can display their work.

English is generally taught using government issued textbooks which have been prepared according to the national English language syllabus guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education, although teachers are encouraged to diversify their materials and use sources other than the textbook alone as long as they achieve the language teaching objectives for each language lesson. Schools set out the annual scope of work at the beginning of each academic year to synchronize what is taught so that examinations may be set fairly. Nevertheless, teachers must still decide on the level of language work given for each individual class within a particular topic and within a particular skill, depending on students' language proficiency in a particular class. Students usually have their own dictionaries, and most language teachers use some form of workbook for classwork or homework. Schools usually have their own libraries and language laboratories. Some schools have special self-access learning centers where students can go to improve their linguistic skills whenever they are free.

The syllabus is based on a communicative model of teaching English according to a skill-based approach. The four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are specifically targeted by sequenced activities, although lately, a new system based on "multiple intelligences" instead of the four skills is being used to increase language competence among Malaysian students. These "multiple intelligences" are roughly divided into three domains: informational use of the language, aesthetic appreciation of the language, and language for interpersonal communication. In this way, students are expected to gain a holistic knowledge of the language as well as the ability to employ it towards any purpose.

Inservice Support

Teachers receive a great deal of support from the Ministry of Education, which regularly conducts inservice training courses, seminars, conferences and workshops on various topics of pedagogic interest when the need arises. The Ministry of Education has recently established the English Language Teaching Center specifically to provide inservice training programs to update and upgrade English language classroom teachers' skills and expertise.

Private English Language Education

Apart from being a compulsory subject in government public schools, private English language centers found in all major cities and most towns in Malaysia offer English language courses tailored to meet the individual needs of people, whether personal or professional. Private primary and secondary schools that use English as the medium of instruction in all subjects are open to all who can afford the fees. These schools are usually attended by students whose parents feel that they would prefer an English-medium instruction for their children instead of the public school system which generally employs Bahasa Malaysia as the language of instruction. Private schools like Garden International School are popular with both Malaysians as well as expatriates.

There are language centers offering English courses for specific purposes, usually patronized by those eager to improve their command of the language for advancement in a specific career or in a specific field (i.e., communicative English or CEP, business communication, company contract training, etc). For instance, employers who want to evaluate their staff's level of language proficiency for any purpose can register them for the English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA) conducted by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board, based on competence levels in the four linguistic skills.

Other centers offer English for academic purposes, usually attended by foreign students who find it difficult to keep up with academic courses due to a lack of proficiency in English. Examples of these courses are the intensive English program (IEP) and the semi-intensive English program offered at most centers. Most language centers also offer the basic English language tests needed for entrance into both local and foreign universities—the TOEFL, IELTS or Cambridge 1119 English. Basically, it is the private language centers' ability to prepare students for these internationally recognized language examinations that ensures their status in the eyes of the public.

Concurrently, teachers in private English language centers are reputed to be more highly specialized than those in the public sector, some holding post-graduate degrees in ESL or EFL. Many expatriates work as language teachers in private schools, and since most are native speakers of English from developed nations, this provides much of the impetus which prompts locals to send their children to these centers for English lessons. Any parent would prefer his child to learn English from a native speaker rather than someone who has acquired it as a second language, despite paper qualifications which bear witness to an equal level of English language proficiency.

English and Tertiary Education

With sixteen fully funded government universities offering a wide range of courses in English (linguistics as well as education degrees), there is no shortage of English degrees available to the public. The oldest and largest university, the University of Malaya, has the largest English department and a separate English literature degree offered under the arts and social sciences department. Post-graduate degrees in English are also available at many government universities.

In 1999, the Malaysian government introduced the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) as a prerequisite for students planning to study at local universities in order to establish and maintain a high standard of English language proficiency among graduates. Malaysia has high numbers of foreign students taking local degrees since Malaysian education is recognized worldwide and is comparatively more affordable. The government aspires to make Malaysia "The Regional Centre for Educational Excellence" in accordance with its Vision 2020.

There are a number of off-shore campuses of foreign universities in Malaysia offering degree courses in English studies. Monash University of Australia is one of these, as well as the University of Nottingham (U.K.) and Curtin University of Technology in Sarawak. All these universities offer degree courses and selected post-graduate degrees in English.

Opportunities for Teachers in Malaysia

Malaysia remains one of the most open places in the world when it comes to job opportunities. While the public school system is only open to those with an excellent command of Bahasa Malaysia, since that is the medium of instruction, the private school system as well as the colleges, language centers and universities welcome any qualified teacher into their ranks.

Vinodini Murugesan has been an English language teacher in a rural public secondary school in Malaysia for the past four years. Her classes include Form Three (15 year olds) and Form Five (17 year olds). Her special interests include literature and drama.

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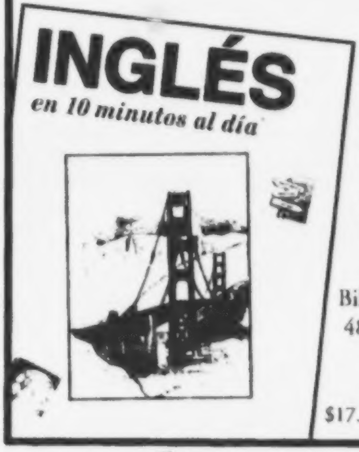

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Employment Focus

Email Rules!

BY GUEST COLUMNIST TOM RIEDMILLER

In the old days of Internet, using email for the job search used to be an edge. It showed you were technically savvy and put you on the "short list" because you were easy to get hold of. It got you noticed and hired. Those days are gone.

Now it's as common as your telephone number. You communicate with colleagues and, yes, prospective employers on their own terms. However, rules for using email are like rules for grammar—they change depending on the situation. So, here are some rules for email. These are not the be-all and end-all but reflect twelve years of experience, failure and success with electronic communication.

1. What? You don't have email? Get it! 'Nuf said.

2. Put that email on your résumé. It is just as important as your phone number.

3. Use grammar and spell checkers! After reading this email that I received a couple years ago, you can see how important it is to think before you hit the "send" button: "Hello! My name is Ima Teacher. I found your advertisement in Dave's .... am extremely interested in the teaching position that youre offering. I have a university degree in English and Education and a Diploma of Second Language teaching........ Although I have not taught in an Arabic country, I can adjust and adapt well in foreign countries. I have language abilities in Japanese and Spanish and are a native English speaker. I would like to foward my résumé, cover letter and professional reference for consideration however I am hestitant to try as you have stated, this is an "all male school", implying students or teachers included. Please reply as to whether there is any reason for me to apply. Regards, Ima Teacher.

Did you find the errors? If not, I hear MacDonald's is hiring.

4. Ditch the smileys :-) and abbreviations like IMHO. And at all costs, cut the shorthand coz if u use shrthnd thn u r sunk. Email to a potential boss is still a business letter.

5. Follow up with email quickly. While that letter is in the mail, the job could be offered to someone else. Follow up on an interview or telephone contact—but remember to balance that with the enduring nature of "snail mail."

6. Avoid Spam! Make your message hot, fresh and personal. Don't cold email if you don't have to. Consider this: What do YOU do with spam besides putting it on a sandwich? If you're like me, you delete it without a thought.

7. Look at these examples and then try to guess what Rule Number 7 is: cutiepie@uni.edu, Iwantaman@gimmie.org, Ilovecats@aol.com. In other words, cut the cute.

8. Look before you leap. It may not be Halloween, but some emails will come back to haunt you later. Ima Teacher should be scared to death. Do you take part in Internet discussion lists like TESL-L? Then reconsider sending that poisoned pen email to that numbskull on the discussion list. He could be the director reading your résumé.

9. Don't use your business email for your job search. Personal use of those services can be legal grounds for discharge. I personally think employers have better things to do than see what kind of jokes you're sending to your grandmother in Florida, but there are some ogres that see it as a company resource that is being abused.

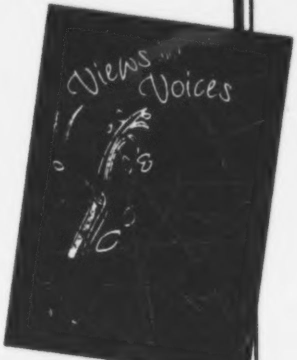
Using company email can work against you in another way. A prospective employer might not like seeing that you are networking or job-hunting on your company's system. Get yourself a personal email account.

10. DON'T SEND ATTACHED FILES. Did I scare you again? Some older systems may render attached files to electronic dust. Some larger files may even make someone's email "crash." Moreover, a virus might take a ride in the attachment. These are things that a busy boss does not want to experience on a bad day.

If you have to send attachments, take some time to consider whom you are mailing to. In an informal survey of about 30 ESL program directors, only about 10% felt "comfortable" dealing with attachments. Others said that it might involve assistance from others.

11. Relax and enjoy using email. It's your most useful job search tool, but use it with care; the way you use it reflects on you as a potential employee.

Tom Riedmiller teaches in the Culture and Intensive English Program at the University of Northern Iowa, Iowa, USA. He is the Associate Convention Chair for the TESOL 2003 conference. You can reach him via his webpage http://fp.uni.edu/riedmill.



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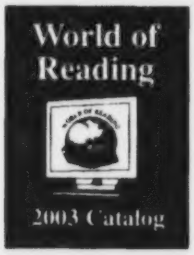

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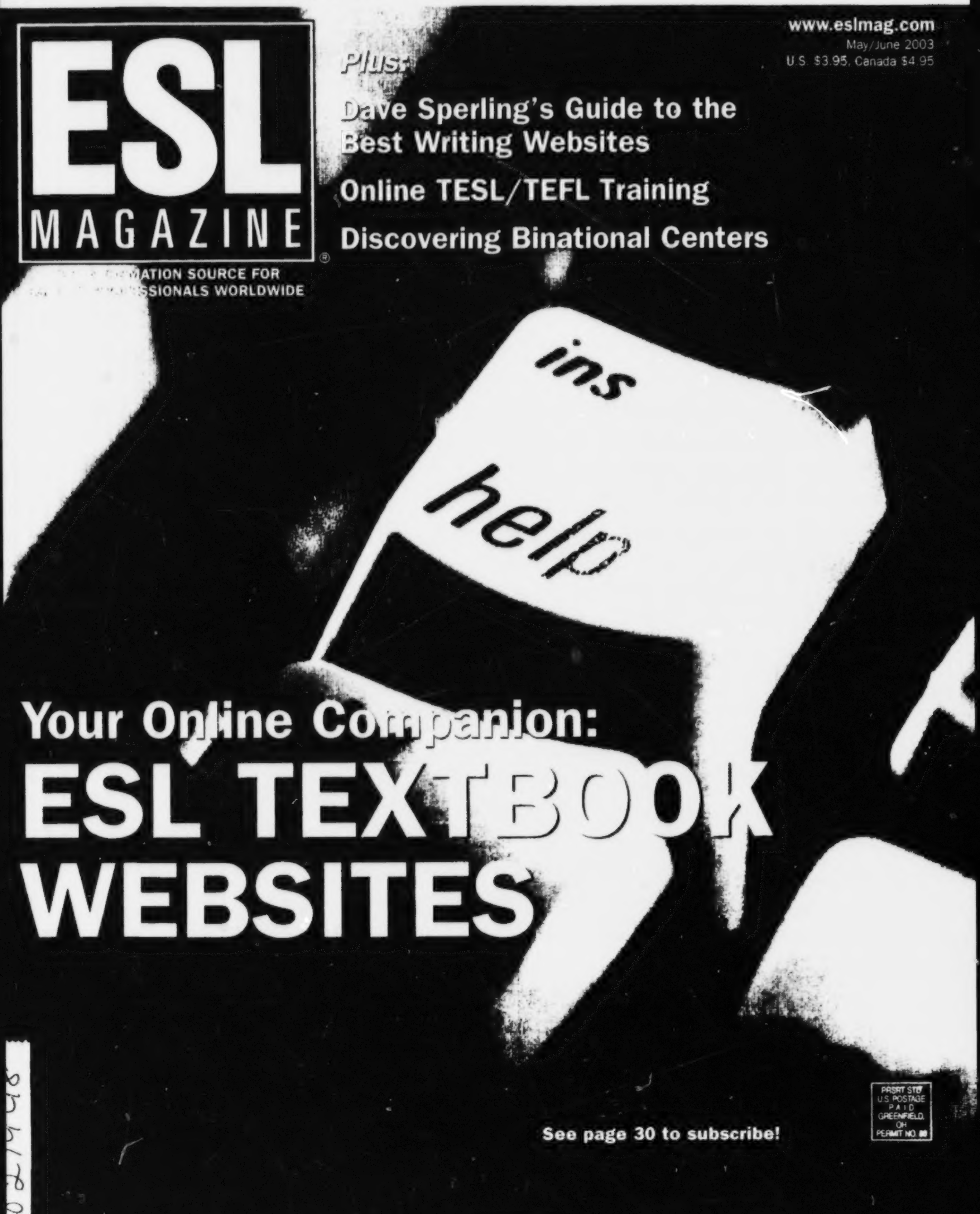

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For "e-novices" and "techno-gurus"

Welcome to our annual technology issue! E-novices, techno-gurus and everyone in between will find useful information on technology to assist in teaching English.

Owen Murray and Nevitt Reagan have evaluated numerous "companion websites"—sites designed by publishers to augment their printed materials. These sites provide teachers and students with a wide variety of supplemental materials and activities—without the burden of a heavy textbook!

Dave Sperling, Internet and TESL guru himself, has scoured the Web for the best sites to support writing instruction. His list is a great resource, and his enthusiasm for the Internet is contagious!

Whether you are new to the field of ESL/EFL or a veteran teacher, there may be online teacher training opportunities for you. Online higher education is in the early stages of development, but according to Thomas Nixon's article, it will continue to gain ground. Online programs help teachers overcome some of the limits of time and distance to acquire the training they want.

Binational centers have a long history of promoting cultural understanding and exchange between the United States and countries in Latin America. Bill Ancker tells the story of binational centers and their activities including English language teaching, a very prominent feature of binational centers.

All the best!

Marilyn Rosenthal

Marilyn Rosenthal
Editorial Director

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Write Us! *Send letters to eslmagazine@cs.com or ESL Magazine, 220 McKendree Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401. Include your name and position or address.*

Developing the Reading Skills of Adults Learning English

► Thank you for Miriam Burt's and Joy Kreeft Peyton's excellent article on adult literacy. The summary of the six types of first language literacy is very concise and the special considerations listed for each is very helpful. This is a great tool especially for teachers with classes of students from all over the world with all kinds of literacy backgrounds.

—TAMSEY DILLENBECK
Charlottesville, VA

Developing Listening Skills with Authentic Materials

► "Developing Listening Skills with Authentic Materials" is a very practical article. Miller has some great ideas for finding and using interesting materials for teaching listening skills. I look forward to incorporating these into my classes. It was also enlightening to see just how inauthentic some listening materials are! In my classes of college-bound ESL students, I have used academic lecture listening materials prepared for ESL students. These materials were not very authentic, but they were convenient and came as a nice set of tapes with a student workbook of learning activities to accompany the "lectures." I think that convenience is one of the main reasons teachers use materials that may not be as authentic as they would like. Thank you for educating us on authenticity and challenging us to make the learning experience as real as possible.

—CATHY COFFMAN
Alexandria, VA

Bringing the Community into the Classroom

► Thank you for publishing Kathleen Olson's article about ways to bring the community into the classroom. We really are wasting our students' time if we don't make our classes as "real world" as possible. I plan to spend time this summer contacting community representatives to participate in our classes.

—BECKY TAI
Atlanta, GA

Teaching English in Malaysia

► Thank you for the excellent article on English teaching in Malaysia. It's exciting to read about a country that finds strength in the preservation and promotion of its own language along with English. The various ethnic groups are bonded together through these two languages—a reminder that unity within a nation does not require a single, dominant language.

—ANDREW FORD
Clearwater, FL

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—Booklist

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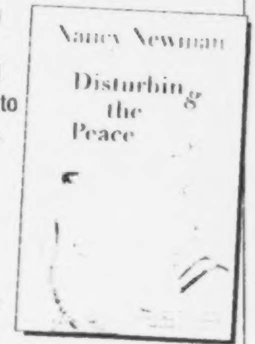
—Publisher's Weekly

"The theme of ESL is not the main interest...but the ESL references are accurate and hold the reader's interest. Read it for fun..."

—ESL Magazine, July/August 2002



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New Online TOEFL Preparation Product

Distance Learning, Inc. (DLI), a provider of Web-based English language training solutions and services, and American Language Academy (ALA), a provider of language learning software products and training content, recently announced their comprehensive online TOEFL preparation package, which combines ALA's courseware with DLI's digital publishing. ALA's course (also on CD-ROM) is designed to prepare ESL/EFL students for the Test of English as a Foreign Language. It integrates the latest computer technology, including digitized voice capabilities, with the structure of a computer-based TOEFL test. The courseware gives students context-sensitive feedback and offers them guidance and suggestions for making the right choice the next time. It also provides students with test-taking skills and strategies.

Commission Submits Final Report on Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans

In October, 2001, President Bush charged a presidential advisory commission with developing an action plan to close the educational achievement gap for Hispanic Americans. The Commission held 11 meetings and four bilingual town hall forums in which they talked and listened to more than 1,600 experts, parents, teachers, students and business and community leaders. On March 31, 2003, the Commission submitted to the President a plan—*From Risk to Opportunity*—to close the achievement gap for Hispanic American children. The Commission found that the nation is losing Hispanic American students all along the education continuum:

- One of every three Hispanic American students fails to complete high school.
- Only 10 percent of Hispanic Americans graduate from four-year colleges and universities, with fewer than 100,000 graduating each year.
- Too many Hispanic American families lack the knowledge to fulfill the high expectations they have for their children, and too many Americans set low expectations for them.
- The federal government does not adequately monitor, measure and coordinate programs and research to the benefit of Hispanic American children and their families, despite the rapidly growing Hispanic American population in the U.S.

From Risk to Opportunity

The Commission recommends six strategies:

1. Set new and high expectations for Hispanic American children by helping parents navigate the educational system, creating partnerships that can provide expanded options for children, and implementing a nationwide public awareness and motivation campaign aimed at increasing educational attainment and achieving the goal of a college education.

2. The Commission strongly supports full implementation and full enforcement of No Child Left Behind. The Commission challenges the states and school districts to, within five years, increase the percentage of fourth graders reading at or above proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress by 30 percentage points and meet or exceed the annual measurable objectives defined in each respective state's accountability plan.

3. Reinforce a high-quality teaching profession by fully preparing all teachers to address the diverse needs of their students, including Hispanics, those with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency by attracting more Hispanics to the teaching profession, and by providing incentives and compensation for successful performance as evidenced by improved student achievement. Launch a national study of the curricula, practica, student teaching experiences and the models used to integrate these preparation formats employed by colleges of education to prepare educators for reading instruction of diverse children.

4. Initiate a new coherent and comprehensive research agenda on the educational development of Hispanic Americans across the educational spectrum from preschool through postsecondary.

5. Ensure full access for Hispanic American students to enter college and demand greater accountability in higher education for Hispanic graduation rates. Challenge the nation's postsecondary institutions to graduate 10 percent more Hispanic American students from colleges and universities each year, than are currently graduating, over the next decade. Urge institutions to explore the increased development of retention programs that would benefit Hispanic American students.

6. Create increased federal accountability and coordination. Increase the accountability and coordination of programs within the federal government to better serve Hispanic American children and their families.

For more information go to http://www.yesican.gov/paceea/final.html.

IEP Survey Reveals Decline in International Enrollment

The results of a recent survey of intensive English programs could be an early indication of a trend toward declining international student enrollments in the United States this fall. The Institute of International Education flash survey queried the membership of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (IEPs) between May 5 and May 16 via email. IEPs reported a 19 percent decline in total enrollments between 2002 and 2003 and an average anticipated decline of nearly 31 percent in this summer's enrollments when compared with the summer of 2001. Survey respondents attributed the enrollment declines to several factors including a substantial increase in visa delays and denials for international students and scholars, concerns about SARS and "internal problems" in Columbia and Venezula. Concerns about the impact of visa delays on educational exchanges have been widely reported in the news media and were the subject of a survey by NAFSA and the Association of American Universities in October of 2002. Because intensive English programs offer a number of enrollment dates throughout the year, changing trends in student numbers are more quickly apparent than those for higher education institutions as a whole.

Conference Calendar

May

- 3 **PennTESOL East**. Philadelphia, PA. Website: http://penntesol.org.
- 27-29 **Damascus University International TEFL Conference**. Damascus, Syria. Contact Waddah Al-Khatib, +963-11-212-0321.
- 28-29 **TESOL Ukraine**. Sevastopol, Ukraine. Contact Svitlana Gladio, tesol_ua@tesol.org.

June

- 7 **Kentucky TESOL**. Cincinatti, OH. Contact Anita Lewis, 513-674-4244.
- 26-28 **Korea Association of Teachers of English**. Daejeon, South Korea. Contact Dr. Lee, Hwa-ja, Lhj@sunchon.ac.kr.
- 27-29 **TESOL Academy 2003**. Washington, DC. Contact 703-836-0774.

July

- 10-11 **Paraguay TESOL**. Asuncion, Paraguay. Contact Andrea Amarilla Saguier, andreaccpa@yahoo.com.
- 11-13 **TESOL Academy 2003**. Denver, CO. Contact 703-836-0774.
- 31-August 2 **Japan Association for Language Education and Technology (LET)**. Osaka, Japan. E-mail PFB01373@nifty.ne.jp.

August

- 23-25 **URUTESOL. 2003 TESOL Southern Cone Regional Convention**. Montevideo, Uruguay. Contact urutesol2001@yahoo.com.

September

- 3-6 **EUROCALL 2003**. Limerick, Ireland. E-mail eurocall@hull.ac.uk.
- 13 **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Inc. (TESOL) Symposium**. Rome, Italy. Contact 703-836-0774.
- 19-21 **Panama TESOL**. Panama City, Panama. Contact Carlos Prescott, 507-221-5595.
- 24-27 **Louisiana TESOL**. New Orleans, LA. Contact Susan Ary, sary@tulane.edu.

October

- 3-5 **IATEFL**. Budapest, Hungary. Contact Eszter Falus, eszter.falus@iatefl.hu.
- 10-12 **INGED-Turkey, BETA-Romania, ETAI-Israel and TESOL-Greece Joint Conference**. Ankara, Turkey. Contact taseda@softhome.net.
- 17-18 **Washington Area TESOL (WATESOL)**. Annandale, VA. Contact britta_ylikopsa@fc.mcps.k12.md.us.
- 17-18 **Wisconsin TESOL (WITESOL)**. Eau Claire, WI. Contact Beth Kozbial Ernst, ernstbk@uwec.edu.
- 18-19 **Korea TESOL (KOTESOL)**. Seoul, South Korea. Contact Yangdon Ju, ydju@hcc.ac.kr.
- 31-1 **Michigan TESOL (MITESOL)**. Ann Arbor, MI. Contact: Jennifer Warren-Craft, 248-942-3184.
- 31-1 **Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL)**. Seattle, WA. Contact: Wanda Hvezda, 509-335-3431.

New Bilingual Publication Answers Parents' FAQs about School

Preguntas que Hacen Los Padres Sobre Las Escuelas (Questions Parents Ask About Schools) is a bilingual publication from the U.S. Department of Education that answers questions frequently asked by parents of elementary and middle-school-aged children who want to help their children learn and succeed. It suggests effective ways parents can support their child's education. The publication aims to help parents fulfill their important role in their child's academic achievement. By taking steps to become involved in their child's education, parents can bridge the gap between home and school to ensure their child's success in learning and in life. The research-based tips in this publication provide both guidance and information about a range of topics: a) preparing their child for school; b) knowing what to expect from their child's kindergarten teacher; c) monitoring school work; d) working with schools and teachers effectively; e) helping their child with reading and homework; f) ensuring that their child's school is safe and drug-free. To learn more, go to http://www.ed.gov/ Family/agbts/Questions/.

What Works Clearinghouse Accepting Nominations

The What Works Clearinghouse of the U.S. Department of Education is accepting nominations for programs, policies, practices, products, and studies to be reviewed for inclusion in its Evidence Reports on seven topic areas, one of which is interventions for elementary English language learners. To read more, go to http://www.w-w-c.org/topicnom.html.

New Survey on Prekindergarten in U.S. Public Schools

According to *Prekindergarten in U.S. Public Schools: 2000–2001*, a study released recently by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, public elementary schools enrolled approximately 822,000 children in prekindergarten classes throughout the country. Thirty-five percent of all public elementary schools, both regular and those designed for children with disabilities, offered such programs. Among the findings was that 15% of prekindergarten students are limited English proficient. About half (49 percent) of the children were white, 24 percent were Hispanic, 23 percent were black, 3 percent were Asian, and 2 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native. Research on the relationship between children's early care and education and school readiness has shown the potential importance of enriching learning experiences for young children. In recent years, renewed attention has focused on the role that public schools might play in providing high-quality programs for prekindergarten children.

Christine Meloni's

NETWORTHY

Popular Songs in American History

Hats off to Lesley Nelson for "Popular Songs in American History," her valuable, well-organized musical website (http://www.contemplator.com/america/). Nelson offers visitors lyrics, midi sound files, tune information, and the history behind a very large number of songs familiar to Americans (although not all written by Americans).

Most of the featured songs are organized chronologically. Here are the historical categories with some examples from each: 1) **17th Century:** "Barbara Allen," "Greensleeves," and "Lavender's Blue," 2) **French and Indian War:** "The Death of General Wolfe," 3) **The Revolutionary War:** "Yankee Doodle," 4) **War of 1812:** "Star Spangled Banner," 5) **Early 1800s to the Civil War:** "Turkey in the Straw," 6) **Civil War:** "Tenting Tonight" and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," 7) **Post Civil War:** "Grandfather's Clock," 8) **The Gold Rush and Westward Journey:** "Clementine" and "Sweet Betsy from Pike," 9) **Cowboys:** "Green Grow the Lilacs," 10) **After 1900:** "Casey Jones" and "When Irish Eyes are Smiling."

Other categories include **Songs of Other Countries** (England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, and Australia) and **Sea Shanties and Songs of the Sea** ("Anchors Aweigh" and "Blow the Man Down").

This site should prove useful to ESL/EFL teachers at all educational levels. The songs can be used to teach history and culture as well as to develop language skills.

Borrowed Words

Another site that teachers will find interesting is **"The English Language: Words Borrowed from Other Languages"** at http://www.krysstal.com/borrow.html. Languages are listed alphabetically. Following the name of each language are words that English borrowed from that language. Here are a few examples: Afrikaans–*slim*, Algonquin–*pecan*, Arabic–*satin*, Danish–*fog*, Dutch–*skipper*, Etruscan–*April*, Finnish–*sauna*, French–*zigzag*, German–*genesis*, Italian–*volcano*, Latin–*veto*, Norwegian–*walrus*, Tagalog–*boondocks*, and Wolof–*banana*.

Christine Meloni is senior research associate in the National Capital Language Resource Center at the George Washington University, Washington, DC. She welcomes comments and suggestions and can be reached at meloni@gwu.edu. Please include Networthy on the subject line of email messages.

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Houghton Mifflin **ESL** 2004

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Grammar Links

This **four-book series** combines comprehensive grammar coverage with a communicative teaching approach to help students use grammar in real-world contexts. Each book offers student and instructor web sites with interactive learning tools.

Online resources for students:

- **Flash cards** of key terms support students' mastery of new concepts and feature a host of interactive tools to track improvement.
- **ACE practice tests** help monitor students' progress in English language skills.
- **Web links** to sites related to unit themes give context to new material.
- **XPRESLINK** assists students of all levels in developing language skills by using web sites to stimulate discussion and writing.

Online resources for instructors:

- **Teaching notes** provide a unit-by-unit overview of each volume in the series.
- **Tapescripts** allow instructors to follow along and guide students through listening exercises.
- **Unit tests, sample syllabi, and answer keys** are available to download.

Online resources for these and many other Houghton Mifflin ESL books can be found at the College Division ESL web site: esl.college.hmco.com

READING MATTERS

This **four-volume series** uses a communicative, integrated skills approach to develop fluency and accuracy in academic reading. Each volume is paired with student and instructor web sites featuring interactive learning tools and downloadable supplements.

Online resources for students:

- **Timed reading passages** allow students to track their reading rates and test comprehension.
- **Flash cards** of key terms support students' mastery of new concepts and feature a host of interactive tools to track improvement.
- **Web links** to sites related to unit themes give context to new material.
- **XPRESLINK** assists students of all levels in developing language skills by using web sites to stimulate discussion and writing.

Online resources for instructors:

- **Sample syllabi** are available to download as Microsoft Word documents.

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- **Call or fax the Faculty Service Center**
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  Fax: 800.733.1810
- **Contact your Houghton Mifflin sales representative:** instructors.college.hmco.com

Your Online Companion: ESL Textbook Websites

BY OWEN MURRAY AND NEVITT REAGAN

Having trouble finding good teaching supplements for your class? Not sure where to direct your students for topical authentic materials? Don't have the teacher's manual for your textbook? The solution to these problems could be just a few clicks away on your textbook's companion website.

In the scramble to make a mark in the new medium of ESL textbook companion websites, publishers are trying to outdo each other in providing supplemental materials, often specifically adapted to the Internet. Many already have a multitude of companion sites up and running—Pearson/Longman alone has 55 sites accompanying ESL textbooks. What's more, like much else on the World Wide Web, these materials are usually free. So, if you use a commercial ESL textbook, you can most likely find a website for it.

Student Resources

Publishers have developed two main types of online activities for students: publisher-produced materials and those linked to external authentic English language websites. The first type consists of publisher-produced quizzes, exercises, resources and games, which often make use of capabilities unique to the Internet such as interactivity or automatic grading. In the other type of online activities, students use external links to the vast assortment of authentic, third party sites on the World Wide Web.

Because computer technology for subjective evaluation is so complex, publisher-produced exercises usually quiz students only on specific items from the textbook or on global receptive skills such as reading and listening. For instance, Thomson/Heinle's *Tapestry* site and McGraw Hill's *Interactions/Mosaic* sites supply multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank quizzes for the vocabulary and grammar in each unit.

Additional reading and listening passages quiz receptive skills on the *Interactions/Mosaic* site. On Houghton Mifflin's *Reading Matters* site, students can even try timed reading passages. On sites like these, students get their scores and correct answers with just one click. If they have entered a teacher's email address, the results can be forwarded there as well.

For discrete items such as vocabulary, companion websites often provide wordlists and review activities. Students may log onto sites such as Pearson/Longman's *NorthStar* website and use their wordlists as a study guide for vocabulary tests. Cambridge's *New Interchange* also features words and expressions for each textbook unit on their teacher's site, as well as vocabulary review crossword puzzles that can be downloaded and printed. Houghton Mifflin's *Grammar Links* and *Reading Matters* websites allow students to work through online flashcards containing words and definitions from every unit.

Games on companion sites create engaging opportunities for students to work with vocabulary or grammar. Oxford University Press' *Headway* website, for example, includes an online game in which users must fly a spaceship into floating words to form correct sentences, without hitting words like "danger." Pearson/Longman's *Pingu Loves English* website for children has a game-like series of animated videos with English narration to teach prepositions of location.

Online tasks for productive skills such as speaking and writing are more difficult to automate. As yet, speaking activities are non-existent on ESL companion sites. For writing tasks, the most common approach (as on Pearson/Longman's *Focus on Grammar* and Thomson/Heinle's *Go For It!* sites) merely requires students to type sentence answers into text boxes underneath questions. These sites then direct students to email their writing to teachers for evaluation, which is not very different from ordinary paper assignments.

The second major type of online activity makes use of external links to authentic English language websites. This offers potentially the most comprehensive supplement to ESL textbooks ever available, especially for reading courses. Many companion site developers have written exercises based on "real world" external websites that are related to textbook themes. The *Focus on Grammar* and *NorthStar* websites both contain worksheet activities that send students to one or more site-external web links. The *NorthStar* exercises are designed for students to do while logged into the student site, whereas the *Focus on Grammar* activities are found on the teacher's site, to be printed and distributed as homework.

Tasks that use these external links may be as simple as copying information or as demanding as writing summaries. For example, in the *Focus on Grammar* Introductory Unit 13 web activity, students follow a link to an external site devoted to famous people and copy basic biographical data. In contrast, to complete the task for *NorthStar* Advanced Unit 8 students explore a similar authentic website, but then write an original summary about a famous person's life.

However, not all companion websites supply explicit tasks for their site-external links. For example, the *Grammar Links* series simply provides URLs for sites with information related to the content of each unit. The *Tapestry* site has a "Web Strategies" page that contains only general web search advice. This approach puts the responsibility on students to make independent use of whatever websites they find. Lower level students will probably find this too difficult.

Teacher Resources

Companion websites often include several types of supporting material for teachers, usually on a separate teacher's site. For example, the comprehensive *Grammar Links* teacher's website features teaching notes, answer keys, tapescripts, and unit tests downloadable as MS Word files or in Adobe Acrobat's universally readable pdf format. Thomson/Heinle's *Looking Ahead* "Virtual Office" also contains extensive instructor's manuals for each of the four books in the series. The *Tapestry* website offers complete "Online Instructor's Manuals" as well as tapescripts for their CNN video clips. The *NorthStar* series website provides teacher support for student Internet activities with detailed instructions and printable handouts.

Teachers often want short supplemental activities or interesting games to take to their next class. These can often be found on a teacher's companion site and downloaded (usually as pdf files) for use in class or as homework. The Cambridge University Press *Let's Talk* website includes several valuable teaching ideas, optional activities, review board games, and several types of classroom language phrases (valuable for encouraging students to use only English in class). Pearson/Longman's Azar grammar series features "The Azar Grammar Exchange" which offers "more than 200 communicative, task-based games and activities." Macmillan's ESL home site "onestopenglish.com" has several language games for young learners, playable online or downloadable for use in the classroom; in addition, the same site's "Lesson Share" page presents a variety of ready-to-use lesson materials which have been submitted by teachers. Pearson/Longman's *English Firsthand* companion site, "The English Firsthand Café" contains photocopiable pdf activities for each unit in the four-book series.

Activities on teacher's sites are sometimes the same as those found in a workbook or instructor's manual, posted online for the teacher's convenience. But more often, they are newly written and provided as an added benefit for users of the textbook. A few companion sites, for example, Macmillan's *Inside Out* and *Reward*, even offer periodic e-lessons that allow registrants to receive fresh material for their courses every week or month. Occasionally, extra resources are available for a fee, as in the case of the *Reward* "Resource Packs."

Finally, some teacher sites feature a bulletin board or forum for teachers worldwide to discuss the textbooks, suggest extra activities, and ask each other questions. For example, the "*English Firsthand* Café" site has a very active teacher discussion center, hosted by author Marc Helgesen, full of interesting message threads posted by teachers. The Azar series "Grammar Q & A Newsgroup" lets teachers post questions and comments about English grammar and usage. Nearly 1,000 questions, answers, and comments posted over the past two years have been archived.

Caveats

Like any new technology, ESL/EFL textbook companion websites have quite a few bugs that need to be worked out. Before sending your students to a companion website, consider these ten questions:

1. Is the site error-free? Some publishers have not edited their online material as carefully as they have their printed textbooks.

2. Are the materials relevant and level-appropriate for your students? This problem occurs mostly with site-external web links, which often contain language that is too difficult for lower level learners.

ESL Textbook Companion Websites

- **Cambridge University Press**
  http://www.cup.org/esl/
- **Houghton Mifflin**
  http://college.hmco.com/esl/instructors/index.html
- **Pearson/Longman**
  http://www.longman-elt.com/cws/index.html
- **McGraw-Hill**
  http://www.mhcontemporaryelt.com/home.html
- **Macmillan Publishers Limited**
  http://www.onestopenglish.com/booksandcourses/
- **Oxford University Press**
  http://www.oup.com/elt/global/teachersclub
  http://www.oup.com/elt/global/products/students/
  http://www.oup.com/us/esl
- **Thomson/Heinle**
  http://www.heinle.com
- **University of Michigan Press**
  http://www.press.umich.edu/esl/compsite/

3. Are there specific tasks for external links? If not, learners may not know what to do with the authentic material.

4. Do the site-external links contain inappropriate advertising?

5. Does the site contain mostly sample pages or promotional materials for the textbook?

6. Are there any dead links or pages "coming soon"?

7. How fast does the website load? Some are frustratingly slow.

8. Is the overall layout of the web pages simple and clear?

9. Do the navigation labels tell you where links lead?

10. Do your students use non-English operating systems or older Web browsers? Watch out for font compatibility problems such as superscripts that appear as unrelated Chinese characters on some Asian operating systems.

Future Possibilities

In the long run, the potential of these companion websites to give students meaningful access to the tremendous volume of English-language information available on the World Wide Web combined with the interactive capabilities of personal computers may revolutionize ESL course design. In the near term, ideally, publishers should attend to the caveats mentioned above and then begin adding new features. Here are three ways in which companion websites could become more valuable for teachers and students.

Making teacher's sites "smarter" will vastly improve their usefulness to teachers. If publishers developed a simple way to verify a user as a teacher, a password-protected teacher's site could become a powerful resource and evaluation center. Aside from having all teacher resource materials organized and instantly available, this kind of site would easily allow teachers to automate correction, scoring, and even collection and return of homework, quizzes and tests, especially those involving discrete items.

ESL Magazine's Online Poll

Do you use online materials on publishers' websites that are designed to accompany printed ESL/EFL textbooks?

42%	Often
42%	Occasionally
9%	Never

www.eslmag.com

Site designers should add audio or video to accompany listening/speaking textbooks. Sound files are easy to transmit on today's fast multimedia systems, which has made self-study listening exercises a viable feature on those sites that offer them. However, listening tasks are currently available on only a very few companion sites; more publishers should consider adding audio. Furthermore, as online video and animation become better, faster, and easier to generate, exercises offering students more realistic, contextualized visual and auditory support for acquiring language should also become more common. These could even become a standard homework format, like the *Pingu Loves English* animated video lessons.

As noted above, companion sites today do not offer higher order tasks for the productive skills, speaking and writing. Speech recognition software is improving and will eventually create opportunities for interactive speaking activities. Software for assessing student essays holistically is also becoming commercially available (e.g., CTB/McGraw-Hill's "Writing Roadmap") but is currently expensive. Eventually, companion website designers should be able to offer online evaluation of written discourse.

Conclusion

ESL textbook companion websites already offer teachers a wider range of supporting and supplemental materials than printed teacher's manuals ever will. If you are using commercial ESL textbooks, it is well worth the effort to check out what can be done with publishers' web-based companion materials. Moreover, many companion websites are updated so frequently that it is quite likely that the amount of materials available will increase, even over the time span of your current courses. Some caution is necessary, since the pedagogical and editorial standards of many websites are not yet on par with the textbooks they accompany. However, by picking and choosing the best your companion site has to offer, you may get more out of the textbook and become a twenty-first century teacher to boot.

Owen Murray received an MATESL from St. Michael's College and has spent the last seven years teaching English and American culture at Kansai Gaidai University in Osaka, Japan.

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Greg Kessler's Technology

Move Your Course Online

In the last issue we explored at a variety of ways to create instructional materials. Now I hope to convey how easily these materials can be delivered online to enhance your instruction further.

What is a Course Management System (CMS)?

A CMS is probably the easiest way to deliver a course, or part of a course, online. To "deliver a course online" may certainly evoke a variety of expectations. Some may expect a complete distance-education course while others may simply want to set up a discussion board or area for email exchange. Both of these solutions, and many that exist between them, are possible through the use of a CMS.

Why Use a CMS?

Are you interested in motivating your students? Do you want them to interact with one another outside of class? Do you want to exchange information with them between classes? Do you want to create an environment in which they can share ideas and opinions that they might otherwise be afraid to share in a conventional classroom? A CMS may be just the answer! A CMS will allow you to interact with students and have them interact with one another. It will also allow you to exchange ideas, documents and media. These systems are designed to be very user-friendly and offer a wide variety of capabilities to enhance an ESL class. Without knowing how to create a webpage, write computer code or manage a server, users can design a shared space for interaction that is only limited by the imagination.

What are the Choices in CMS?

Many people may already have access to the more popular systems, such as Blackboard® and WebCT® (usually by contract with your university, school or district). These two offer subscribers a very extensive collection of features. There are also free services available to educators that have fewer features, but may serve your needs perfectly. Perhaps the easiest of these is Nicenet's Internet Classroom Assistant (ICA). Others, including Edventure and ATutor, offer many of the same features, but require more technical expertise to operate and maintain.

Some Popular Features

While each system is slightly different, all include some of the following: discussion boards, assignment posting, quizzes and surveys, shared Internet links, class schedules, class documents, quick group or individual email capabilities, personal document exchange area and gradebook.

How Can I Get Started Using a CMS?

If your school has a license for one of the commercial products, they are likely to have a course establishment policy as well. Many schools will also restrict access to those students who are currently registered for courses, thus, eliminating collaborative use by other parties such as colleagues at other institutions (the cost of these licenses is usually based on number of users). It is also possible to purchase a contract for a single department if you have the means to do so. However, if your school does not have a contract, or you want to make access available to select outsiders, you can create a simple free class in Nicenet's ICA by visiting the address at the end of this article.

Organize and Orient

Once you have established a class, you have to begin organizing the materials you plan to use. Organization is important for any course, but because students work independently with a CMS, it requires even more attention to organization. Once you have done this, consider how your students might navigate the system. It is very important to make sure that you not only organize all of the materials in a reasonable and logical way, but that you also familiarize your students with the organization.

Use it Early and Consistently

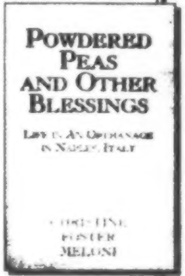
Many novice online teachers have been frustrated by late introduction or intermittent use of CMSs. Students who are allowed time to forget the organizational patterns or fall out of the habit of participation are likely to be less involved. Likewise, students who do not begin to use such a system until later in a class are likely to be indifferent.

Take it For a Test Drive

It is always difficult to envision aspects of technology form the written word. To get a hands-on experience with a CMS, I invite readers to visit http://www.nicenet.org/ and click "join a class." Once you have done this, enter the key, "374382S34" This will allow you to join a class to discuss this column. In this forum users can experiment with a sample class, share ideas about potential use, share suggestions for future columns, and experiment with creating classes of their own. Users will also be able to find a collection of resources related to this and future articles in this column. I hope to see you online!

Greg Kessler teaches in the Ohio Program of Intensive English (OPIE) at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He manages OPIE's use of a self-access computer lab and develops distance programs. He is currently chair of TESOL CALL Interest Section.

New book from Christine Meloni!



Christine Meloni, *ESL Magazine's* Networthy columnist, began her EFL teaching career in 1962 at Casa Materna, an orphanage in Naples, Italy. She was a university student then, spending her summer as a volunteer at Casa Materna.

She has recently published a book about Casa Materna entitled *Powdered Peas and Other Blessings: Life in an Orphanage in Naples, Italy*. This book is a collection of the personal stories of 21 former residents who describe what it was like growing up in this home and the impact it has had on their lives. All speak of Casa Materna and the founding family with gratitude and affection.

Order online at:
www.xlibris.com/powderedpeasandotherblessings.html

Read a brief author biography and book summary as well as a sample chapter at this site.

Dave Sperling's Guide to the Internet's Best Writing Resources

BY DAVE SPERLING

"What I find when I speak to other public school teachers is fear. They are afraid to get involved and try. It sounds strange coming from teachers, but that's the truth. In many cases, however, this fear comes from lack of experience or exposure to the Internet."
—Lynore Carnuccio, Mustang Public School System, Oklahoma

"Wow! They've got the Internet on computers now!" *—Homer Simpson*

I was truly amazed the first time I bought a computer, logged onto the Internet, and sent my very first email message. Within a few hours I was communicating with other human beings throughout the world, logging onto university libraries, conducting research for my graduate studies, and chatting "live" with friends in England, Canada, Japan, and Thailand. A computer can do all this? Wow! It was this excitement and curiosity that motivated me to begin building web pages, resulting in the creation of my website, Dave's ESL Cafe.

Here we are, halfway through 2003, and I still run into teachers who are afraid of computers and the Internet. Well, here is a little secret: the Internet is a fun, exciting, and extremely powerful learning tool for you and your students. I made this discovery back in 1995 when I introduced my intermediate writing class to the Internet. What were the results?

My students found the Internet fun and "cool." They were thrilled to share their creativity with the entire world. They increased their reading and vocabulary in English because they were exploring the World Wide Web and discovering material that interested them. My students were writing email messages in English every day. They were meeting and communicating with others from around the world. They were becoming more motivated and excited about learning English. They were even coming to my class early!

The Internet is quickly becoming the premier resource for students to practice and improve their writing skills in English. On the World Wide Web students can find numerous high quality websites that include online dictionaries, encyclopedias, and libraries, as well as worksheets and exercises on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and essay writing. Students can even practice what they've learned by communicating in English with keypals from around the globe. This guide will highlight some of my favorite online writing resources for ESL students. Have fun!

✱ Business Writing

"In the business world, the rearview mirror is always clearer than the windshield." *—Warren Buffett*

Bull's Eye Business Writing Tips
BASIC-LEARNING.COM/WBWT/TIPS-INDEX1.HTM
An archive of over 300 tips on how students can improve their business writing skills. It's also possible to sign up to receive their free weekly business writing tips via email.

Business English for Teachers and Learners
WFI.FR/VOLTERRE/BUSINESSENGLISH.HTML
An outstanding resource that focuses on teaching and learning business English as a foreign or second language.

Business English on the Net
WWW.WFI.FR/VOLTERRE/BIZENGLISH.HTML
Linda Thalman's guide on how to improve business English skills using the Internet.

Business Letter Writing Basics
ESL.ABOUT.COM/LIBRARY/WEEKLY/AA041399.HTM
Kenneth Beare produced this very useful guide for about.com.

Professional Writing
OWL.ENGLISH.PURDUE.EDU/HANDOUTS/PW/
From the Perdue University Online Writing Lab, students can find information about various aspects of business, technical, and professional writing.

✱ Dictionaries and Thesauruses

"If a word in the dictionary were misspelled, how would we know?"
—Steven Wright

Language Dictionaries and Translators
WWW.WORD2WORD.COM/DICTIONARY.HTML
This awesome resource is produced by Word2Word and has links to dozens of language dictionaries and translators... from Abadani to Zapotec!

Mirriam-Webster Online
WWW.M-W.COM/HOME.HTM
Don't know the meaning of a certain word? Help is on the way with Mirriam-Webster Online, a fast and extensive online resource that is based on *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Enter a word or phrase in the search box and you'll quickly get its pronunciation, part of speech, etymology, and definitions. You can also locate its synonyms by clicking on the thesaurus button. This is an extremely potent resource.

OneLook Dictionary Search
WWW.ONELOOK.COM
Wow, what an amazing resource! If you have a word, idiom, or slang that needs a definition or translation, this resource will quickly search more than 5 million words in more than 900 online dictionaries.

Thesaurus.com
THESAURUS.REFERENCE.COM
A simple and powerful online thesaurus.

Yourdictionary.com
WWW.YOURDICTIONARY.COM
This is a newly discovered resource for me and I ended up spending several hours here exploring dictionaries in over 280 languages, 100 different language courses, and 50 different glossaries.

✱ Email

"Human beings are human beings. They say what they want, don't they?

They used to say it across the fence while they were hanging wash. Now they just say it on the Internet."
—*Dennis Miller*

A Beginner's Guide to Effective Email
WWW.WEBFOOT.COM/ADVICE/EMAIL.TOP.HTML
This informative article, written by Kaitlin Duck Sherwood, teaches the fundamental differences between email and paper-based communication. This is a must read for anyone new to email and the Internet.

Email Keypals for Language Fluency
KYOTO-SU.AC.JP/~TROBB/KEYPALS.HTML
An excellent article by Thomas Robb covering all aspects of how to make email work for you and your students in the language classroom.

EPals Classroom Exchange
WWW.EPALS.COM
The Internet is an fine place to make friends from around the world and, of course, to practice your English writing. Over 4.5 million students and teachers are building skills and enhancing learning with ePALS. Established in 1996, ePALS has 79,767 classroom profiles bringing people in 191 countries together as cross-cultural learning partners and friends.

Keypals Club
WWW.TEACHING.COM/KEYPALS/
Start a project with another class, or just create a new friendship with someone on the other side of the globe. KeyPals Club is a free educational service from teaching.com.

Students of the World
WWW.STUDENTSOFTHEWORLD.INFO
Very good keypal and "snail mail" resource for students, brought to you by Etudiants du Monde, a French non-profit organization.

☼ Encyclopedias

"Wisdom begins in wonder."
—*Socrates*

Assorted Encylopedias on the Web
EDIS.WIN.TUE.NL/ENCYCLOP.HTML

Columbia Encyclopedia
WWW.BARTLEBY.COM/65/
Containing nearly 51,000 entries (with six and one-half million words on a huge range of topics), and with more than 80,000 hypertext cross-references, the current Sixth Edition is among the most complete and up-to-date encyclopedias ever produced.

Encyclopedia Britannica
WWW.BRITANNICA.COM
Search the 32-volume Encyclopedia Britannica, Britannica's Student and Concise Encyclopedia, websites, magazine article, and more.

Infoplease
WWW.INFOPLEASE.COM
Combining the contents of an encyclopedia, a dictionary, an atlas and several up-to-the-minute almanacs loaded with statistics, facts, and historical records, Infoplease places the resources of an entire reference information center at your fingertips.

MSN Learning and Research
ENCARTA.MSN.COM
A comprehensive online encyclopedia powered by Microsoft's Encarta.

☼ Free Web Space

"Looking at the proliferation of personal web pages on the Net, it looks like very soon everyone on earth will have 15 Megabytes of fame."
—*M.G. Siriam*

Angelfire
ANGELFIRE.LYCOS.COM
Free web space from Lycos.

Blurty
WWW.BLURTY.COM
Free space to create an online journal for all the world to read.

WebSpawner.com
WWW.WEBSPAWNER.COM
My 12-year-old son turned me onto this website because he was able to create a very sophisticated website in minutes. Just click on "Create Webpage," fill out the form, and away you go!

Yahoo! Geocities
GEOCITIES.YAHOO.COM
This has been around for quite a number of years and is still one of the most popular. Free and paid versions are available.

☼ Sites for Fun

"To me, growing up digital means having fun while you're learning."
—*Chris, 8 years old, from the book* **Growing up Digital** *by Dan Tapscott*

Celebrity Address Emporium
WWW.SPRINGROSE.COM/CELEBRITY/
Practice makes perfect, so students can practice their writing by communicating with their favorite singers or movie stars. Celebrity Address Emporium has a listing of thousands of addresses of celebrities from around the world.

Grandpa Tucker's Family Fun: A Time for Rhyme
GRANDPATUCKER.COM/RHYME-TIME1.HTML-SSI
Bob Tucker's fun guide on how to rhyme and create poetry.

7 Internet Teaching Tips

1. Don't be afraid of knowing less than your students!
Personally, I just can't keep up with all this new technology, and I am constantly learning from my students, nephews, and now my 12-year-old son!

2. Don't get frustrated!
The ride isn't always smooth sailing, so try to keep your cool when things don't go as planned.

3. Don't abandon pen and paper!
I make my students keep a notebook handy when surfing the Net so they can take notes, jot down new vocabulary and interesting information.

4. Make it social; not antisocial!
When working in the computer lab, I often pair students together or have them work in small groups. This makes the class more communicative, interactive, and fun.

5. Get your students away from the computer sometimes!
Break into groups and discuss what students have learned and discovered from their Internet journey.

6. Don't be afraid to experiment!
Remember: what doesn't work for one group may very well work for another.

7. Integrate the Internet into what you're teaching in class!
If, for example, you're teaching about food, have your students search the Web for recipes.

It's imperative that teachers not use the Internet as a babysitting tool, but instead as a powerful learning and teaching resource where your students can read, write, explore, and communicate.

Pizzaz! Creative Writing and Storytelling Ideas
UOREGON.EDU/~LESLIEOB/PIZZAZ.HTML
Created by Leslie Opp-Beckman, PIZZAZ! is dedicated to "providing simple creative writing and oral storytelling activities with copyable (yes, copyable!) handouts for use with students of all ages."

Wacky Web Tales
WWW.EDUPLACE.COM/TALES/
This fun resource from publisher Houghton Mifflin allows students to create funny stories by filling in various parts of speech. Recent stories include "The Mummy," "The Camping Trip," and "The Box." Great for all age groups!

☼ Grammar

"I am the Roman Emperor and am above grammar."

—Emperor Sigismund

Common Errors in English
WSU.EDU/~BRIANS/ERRORS/INDEX.HTML
The online version of Paul Brians' book, *Common Errors in English Usage*.

Grammar When You Need It
GEOCITIES.COM/ATHENS/OLYMPUS/7583/INDEX.HTML
A unique resource developed by David Tillyer, Grammar When You Need It is dedicated to the idea that it's best for student to learn grammar when they need it. Color-coded lessons offer advice to beginning, intermediate, and advanced students.

NetGrammar
BUSBOY.SPED.UKANS.EDU/~ALLENQ/NETGRAMMAR/
Written by an ESL/EFL practitioner, NetGrammar focuses on English grammar through interactive listening, reading and writing activities. 15 online units include a preview, grammar focus, listening, reading writing, and review.

The Online English Grammar
WWW.EDUFIND.COM/ENGLISH/GRAMMAR/
This is an amazingly comprehensive grammar resource from Anthony Hughes. Not to be missed!

☼ Libraries

"I must say that I find television very educational. The minute somebody turns it on, I go to the library and read a book."

—Groucho Marx

Libraryspot.com
WWW.LIBRARYSPOT.COM
LibrarySpot.com is designed to make finding the best topical information on the Internet a quick, easy and enjoyable experience.

Libweb
SUNSITE.BERKELEY.EDU/LIBWEB/
Updated daily at midnight, Libweb lists over 6,600 pages from libraries in over 115 different countries.

Stardots.com
WWW.STARDOTS.COM/INDEX2.SHTML
I just discovered this site, and I'm really glad that I did! Stardots.com is a directory of the Web's best resources on everything from art to zoology!

Yahoo! Libraries
DIR.YAHOO.COM/REFERENCE/LIBRARIES/
Awesome collection of links to online libraries from around the world, with topics ranging from art to transportation.

☼ Online Help

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being."

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ask an Expert
WWW.ASKANEXPERT.COM
Ask an Expert is a must for anyone working on a research project because you'll find the Web sites and email addresses of over 300 experts on hundreds of subjects ranging from "Amish to Zoo Keeping." Do you have a question? If so, surf over to Ask an Expert!

ESL Cafe's Help Center
WWW.ESLCAFE.COM/HELP
Need a question quickly answered? Free help is on the way at ESL Cafe's 24 hour ESL Help Center. Hundreds of questions are answered each month from a high quality team of English teachers from around the world. This site was created specifically for English language students.

☼ Online Writing Labs (OWLS)

"Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing."

—Ben Franklin

The Online Writery
MISSOURI.EDU/~WRITERY/INDEX2.HTML
Located on the campus of the University of Missouri-Columbia, you'll find a considerable collection of online references and search resources, as well as "cybertutors" that will answer your questions and problems about writing. Try joining the discussions at the Writery Cafe, where you can "kick around ideas, dream up projects, commiserate about problems, plot and scheme, goof, theorize, etc."

Paradigm Online Writing Assistant
WWW.POWA.ORG/
This is a newly discovered resource for me and truly one of my favorites. Created by Dr. Chuck Guilford from Boise State University, students will find loads of help on what to write, how to organize, revise, edit, compose essays, and how to document sources. This resource is not to be missed!

Purdue Online Writing Lab
OWL.ENGLISH.PURDUE.EDU
This was one of the very first "OWLs" or online writing labs and is still one of the very best. Located at Indiana's Purdue University, you'll find a large collection of Internet search tools, links to some of the best writing resources on the Web, and over 130 instructional sheets that include help with general writing concerns, writing research papers, citing sources, writing for the job search, professional writing, English as a second language, parts of speech, sentence construction, punctuation, and spelling. This site will keep you busy for months!

The Write Place Catalogue (LEO)
WRITING.RICHMOND.EDU/WRITING/WWEB.HTML
This is a terrific resource from Sharon Cogdill and Judith Kilborn of St. Cloud State University. You can spend hours on their tutorials: Business Writing, Citing Sources in Research Papers, Grammar, The Process of Writing, Punctuation, Research Papers, Sentence Structure, and Style of Writing.

☼ Punctuation

"You know you've been spending too much time on the Internet when every colon appears as a pair of eyes."

—Erik

OWL Handouts: Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling
OWL.ENGLISH.PURDUE.EDU/HANDOUTS/GRAMMAR
Brought to you by Purdue University Online Writing Lab, you'll find handouts and exercises on grammar, pronunciation, and spelling.

Punctuation
WWW.UOTTAWA.CA/ACADEMIC/ARTS/WRITCENT/HYPERGRAMMAR/PUNCT.HTML
An excellent punctuation guide created by Frances Peck from the University of Ottawa.

Yes English Guide to Punctuation
YESENGLISHONLINE.COM/PUNCTUATION.HTM
A super tutorial covering the capital letter, full stop (period), ellipsis, semicolon, comma, colon, question mark, exclamation mark, apostrophe, quotation marks, brackets, dash, and the hyphen.

☼ Search Tools

"To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal ideas from many is research."

—Anon

AlltheWeb
WWW.ALLTHEWEB.COM
This is a new one for me, but I like it a

lot because it's extremely fast and comprehensive.

Ask Jeeves
WWW.ASK.COM
A search tool that is actually cool, easy, and fun.

AskJeeves for Kids
WWW.AJKIDS.COM/
Great for K-6 students and teachers.

Google
GOOGLE.COM
What can I say? This is my all time favorite search engine and the one that I use every day. Don't forget that you can also search for images and news.

Yahoo
YAHOO.COM
It's still one of the best after all of these years. This is a terrific place just to explore.

Spelling

"I have a spelling checker
It came with my PC;
It plainly marks four my revue
Mistakes I cannot sea.
I've run this poem threw it,
I'm sure your pleased too no,
Its letter perfect in it's weigh,
My checker tolled me sew."
—Janet Minor

Frequently Misspelled Words
WWW3.WCU.EDU/~MKISER/MISSPELL.HTML
This list of the most frequently misspelled words in English was even helpful for me, a native English speaker!

Guide to American English Spelling
ISS.STTHOMAS.EDU/STUDYGUIDES/SPELLING.HTM
This resource from the University of St. Thomas offers strategies on how to improve one's spelling.

How Well Can You Spell?
ENCARTA.MSN.COM/QUIZ/QUIZ.ASP?QUIZID=36
Test your spelling skills with a quiz on the most commonly misspelled words in English. Fun!

Musical Spelling Rules
GARDENOFPRAISE.COM/SPELL1.HTM
This unusual resource by Patsy Stevens uses music to help student learn English spelling rules.

Dave Sperling lives in Los Angeles, California with his wife and two children. He is the creator of the well-known ESL/EFL website Dave's ESL Cafe. He is the author of The Internet Guide for English Language Teachers, Dave Sperling's Internet Guide, *and* Dave Sperling's Internet Activity Workbook.

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Richard Firsten

The Grammar Guy

Counting on You!

Dear Richard: While I was rereading Chapter 2 [of your book], I realized that what I thought was the English article problem is more about nouns that have both countable sense and uncountable sense. Below are examples of what I mean. Please help me sort this out!

—Yu Soon-ja, Palmdale, CA

Thanks for writing, Soon-ja. Let me respond in a methodical way (examples from the Cambridge International Dictionary [1995]).

Activity—"They're concerned by low economic *activity*." (uncountable) The word *activity* in this case has a different meaning from the word as it's used in the next sentence. The uncountable noun *activity* means general actions, people doing things, or things happening.

"We offer many outdoor *activities*." (countable) The countable term *activity* refers to an individual sporting event or other kind of event that can be counted. "We've planned three outdoor *activities* for the kids: a 3-legged race, a swimming race, and a pie-eating contest."

Noise—"The street was packed with vendors and bars; the *noise* was unbelievable." (uncountable) Of course, here, we use *the* because we're referring to specific noise coming from those places. When *noise* is uncountable, it refers to generally distasteful sounds without specifying one kind or another: "One reason I dislike big cities is having to put up with all that loud *noise*."

"There was a loud *noise*." (countable) *Noise* is countable here because we mean one specific, unpleasant sound from one source.

"They made *noises* about the budget problem." (countable) Here is an example of an idiomatic expression. I can say that *noises* in this case is synonymous with "complaints" or "objections," both of which are countable.

Newspaper—"A daily newspaper is published everyday except on Sunday in Britain." (countable) Here, the countable item, a newspaper, refers to one publication.

"You should wrap your dishes in newspaper." (uncountable) Here, the uncountable item refers to the material, not a publication. It's a general category of material just like cotton, linen, or wool, all of which are uncountable nouns.

This is a complex topic because making the noun countable or uncountable depends on its context. Coming up with hard-and-fast rules is very tricky.

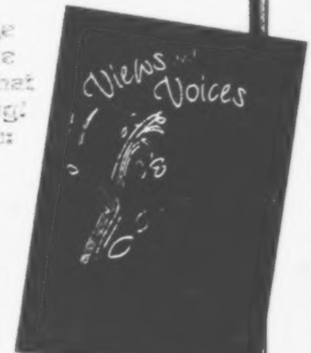
Here's the "Food for Thought" question from our last issue: You go to school, you go to church, you go to bed. Why don't you go to *the* school, go to *the* church, or go to *the* bed? You can say, "The school/church I go to is five blocks away," right? So what's going on with the definite article, or lack of it?

Jean-Claude Billet of Toulouse, France emailed this: "The three examples you listed identify general activities; they don't refer to a specific school, church, or bed. The sentences where you can use *the* do refer to specific buildings or things. That's the difference."

Vive la différence, Jean-Claude. You're absolutely correct! Thanks for that succinct explanation.

Now for this issue's "Food for Thought." How would you explain the difference between *dish* and *plate*? How about *ground* and *land*? What about *large* and *big*, *small* and *little*?

Richard Firsten is an ESL instructor, teacher trainer and author specializing in grammar and methodology. He currently teaches at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center in Miami, Florida. Reach him at ESLGrammarGuy@aol.com.



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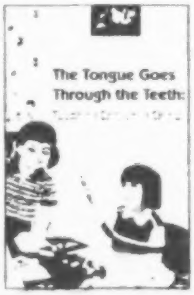
Get Acquainted with TEFL in China

BY DANIEL B. FREEMAN

The Tongue Goes Through the Teeth:
Teaching English in China
Pamela Toole, Director
Lotus Blossom Productions, 2000

The Tongue Goes Through the Teeth, a documentary about teaching English in China, particularly in Beijing and Hong Kong, is an interesting and important film for anyone contemplating traveling far from home and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The film has four parts: the school, the classroom, the teachers and the students. It focuses on the private lives of actual classroom teachers who are living and teaching in China. They talk about themselves and what they hope to achieve and describe their adventures as ex-pats. There are teachers from the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Some of the teachers are non-native English speakers from mainland China and Hong Kong. They all "tell it like it is." Even viewers who know little about teaching English as a foreign language will enjoy this documentary. It has a certain charm and seems to come from the hearts of these personable people. It captures the adventure of teaching abroad and answers the questions of those who would use their "native speaker" qualifications for a chance to view other cultures and hear other languages.



English classes taught in Chinese schools by Chinese teachers are Confucian in that they are rigid. The classes are immense. The teachers give the information in Chinese with no conversation. The students become walking dictionaries who can't ask where the bathroom is but know how to say "plunger" in barely recognizable English. Hence the need for a communicative approach provided by native English speakers in their schools.

Several of the people in the film are living and working in China today. They include Robert Toomey, who owns a school in Beijing called Robert's Education Center (REC). He hopes to open more schools and become the Berlitz of China. It looks as though he might make it.

Lucas teaches at REC. He is a happy-go-lucky Australian, very attractive with his casual style and his worn-out baseball cap. He wants to stay in China for another year, maybe more, maybe less—whatever life serves up. His hat and his smile say it all.

Li Yanshee is a non-native English speaker who works at the Culture University in Beijing. She teaches English to diplomats, and although her command of English is good, it would be difficult for diplomats to learn enough from her to be fluent in English.

Brian, another non-native English speaker, is a very serious teacher, and one can see that he believes in what he does and thinks of himself as a future expert in EFL. He believes in teaching conversational English.

Jared is bright and sincere. He is teaching English in China in order to return to China in the future with an MBA and work in Chinese-American business ventures.

Jane teaches in Hong Kong. She has had experience in teaching English and culture. Jane also sings with a rock band in her spare time. She tells about life in Hong Kong, which is different from Beijing in that it is more modern and more crowded. It also has more indoor plumbing. The scenes of Hong Kong and Beijing are fascinating but too few.

This documentary is particularly informative for untrained or novice teachers who wish to look at other cultures. It does not address the professionally trained EFL teacher and provides no new theories or teaching strategies. However, it does present an extremely interesting look at the teaching situation in China today and an opportunity for people who may be interested in teaching there to get a realistic picture of living and teaching in Beijing or Hong Kong.

Dr. Daniel B. Freeman is author/co-author of a number of ESL/EFL books including Speaking of Survival *(Oxford University Press),* Longman Photo Dictionary *(Longman, Inc.), and* McGraw -Hill Connections Readers *(McGraw-Hill).*

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ONLINE TESL/TEFL TRAINING

BY THOMAS NIXON

Since the advent of web-based online learning in the mid-1990s, the number of higher education degree programs offering such instruction has skyrocketed. It has grown from a few in 1995 to over a hundred in 2003, and the future looks bright. While online learning has been available since the 1980s, it was the advent of the World Wide Web in 1995 that caused the online learning explosion. While there are still many more classroom-based degrees available than online degrees, online learning is gaining ground.

Distance learning takes many forms, but it is clear that the online form is growing in popularity and at a faster rate than other types of programs. While the largest group of distance learning programs is still independent study ("correspondence") courses, you can look for this to change. There is so much available on the Internet for the younger (and not so younger) generations to explore—this includes earning degrees.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

Online learning has a number of advantages over traditional classroom-based learning. John Bear, author of *Bears' Guide to Earning Degrees by Distance Learning*, asserts "it offers a level of flexibility unavailable from a traditional program, in that the student can pursue his or her studies whenever and wherever he or she wishes. Furthermore, one can partake of a 'smorgasbord' of choices, doing courses or classes from a number of different schools, often at a lower cost, and always with greater convenience than driving to campus, looking for parking, and sitting in a hard chair hour after hour."

The one major disadvantage can be isolation. Some students just naturally perform better in a classroom setting. However, there are ways to create relationships even though you are far from other students. Read the posts of your classmates and find a person or two with whom you tend to agree (or disagree, if you appreciate a challenge). Begin an email relationship through which you can discuss the course, online learning, and the future of your academic field. Friendships will break the solitude bubble.

Another disadvantage can be cost. Many online programs are quite expensive. However, as more programs become available, prices will have to drop for schools to be competitive. At present, the prices in many programs are high precisely because they can be. Little competition leads to a seller's market.

The Dangers of Online Learning

There are a number of dangers in online learning. Diploma mills abound on the Internet. While such schools have been with us for a long time, the Internet has given them the opportunity to look respectable and preserve the anonymity necessary for unethical and/or criminal acts. Bear states, "The 'bad guys' are well aware of the power, the lure of online learning, and we have seen an enormous growth in the number of fake and terrible schools." Before you sign up with any school, check their accreditation status. (See information under subhead "Accreditation.")

The other danger is that many schools are rushing to board the online bandwagon, and in their haste they are not adequately preparing their courses for the transition to cyberspace. While the information is and should be the same in online and ground-based courses, the presentation must be different. Putting lecture notes in an Adobe pdf file and placing them on a website is not online learning. "This so-called 'shovelware' is a most unfortunate use of the powerful technology available: the equivalent of using your Maserati only to make short shopping trips to the mall," says Bear.

How do you deal with this? Ask how long the school has been offering online programs. Ask to see one of their courses in action, perhaps "observing" a class or two. If you're not satisfied with what you see, move on. Even within online learning, there are a number of different presentation formats. Find out what works for you.

The Future

Management guru Peter Drucker has made the prediction that by 2030 much of higher education will be online. Although many academic pundits may smile at such an assertion, it doesn't take a stretch of the imagination to believe that parts of programs will have gone online. Bear believes that online learning is really in its infancy, and he is certain that the number of online students is likely to grow exponentially.

Michael Lambert, executive director of the Distance Education and Training Council, offers this view of the future: "The future of online learning is clearly one of increased usage by all sectors of education, from kindergarten through postgraduate study. It has proved to be educationally sound, cost effective, and socially acceptable in virtually all educational settings. The technology is now easier than ever to use, technology costs will continue to plummet, and consumers will continue to demand more convenience and therefore we will see an unstoppable, tremendous expansion in online learning worldwide."

TESOL Training Online: Masters, Certificates, and Endorsements

One of the first online U.S. TESOL programs was the Master of Science in Education, TESOL Concentration, offered by Shenandoah University. For director Ashley Hastings, it was a matter of survival. In 1999 he and Brenda Murphy were asked to take charge of the TESOL program. The catch? Like a number of programs across the United States, enrollment was declining and the program was losing money. The university president was quite open about the fact that they needed to raise enrollment quickly or the program would die.

Hastings and Murphy realized that Winchester, Virginia was too small a market from which to draw enough new students. Distance learning, in particular online learning, offered them new possibilities. With such a small departmental faculty, they realized that somehow they would need to offer all of the required courses each semester. They decided to post videotaped courses of actual classes online with some semi-permanent web components. Incidentally, this set-up works particularly well for students using less sophisticated computers (as is the case in many places around the world).

Courses are presented in non-realtime. While you are indeed looking at a Shenandoah University classroom, it may or may not be the current crop of students. The advantage to this format is that you can click "rewind" and watch a segment several times to understand more difficult information.

The Shenandoah University online TESOL program is similar in content and scope to residential programs. It requires thirty-three units of coursework. The big difference is that the program requires only one campus visit at the very end to present the master's capstone project. Otherwise, the entire program is online. In addition to the master's program, Shenandoah University also offers two TESOL certificates (in nine-credit and eighteen-credit versions).

Shenandoah University is on the frontline of online TESOL training. For them it was a matter of survival. Other schools are getting into the act because of the demand for TESOL training with online advantages. The reality resulting from September 11, 2001, is that fewer international students will be going to U.S.-based programs. They may, however, still be interested in an American credential.

Other schools offering online masters programs are the University of New England in the U.K. (Applied Linguistics), the University of Tasmania and the University of Central Florida (in the process of starting.)

Transworld Schools in San Francisco started an online TESOL certificate program because of the increasing demand for easily accessible TESOL training. Ceri Rich-Odeh, president of Transworld, states, "Many non-certified teachers or new teachers need training but are unable to travel to an on-site course."

One difficulty that Transworld faced was how to create the practicum experience. With a TEFL/TESL/TESOL type of certificate, many employers require some type of practicum experience. And this is as it should be. To accomplish this, Transworld requires a one-week residency during which students can take their practicum and experiential courses.

Transworld's TESOL certificate is respected worldwide, and the online program puts it within reach of more people. Many students cannot afford room and board for a month in San Francisco. Now they can get the respected credential without breaking the bank. There is a savings on the cost of the course as well as on the accommodations. The Transworld Distance Learning CTESOL course is accredited by ACCET and approved by BPPVE (State of California).

Keith Folse of the University of Central Florida (in a recent interview from an Internet café in Amsterdam) discussed why his school made the decision to move toward offering online courses for Florida's ESOL endorsement. For public school teachers in Florida to get the ESOL endorsement, they must take a series of five courses at the university. According to Folse, this is a problem because "the geography of the state of Florida is such that many people who do attend university classes have to commute. Having some courses online makes 'attending' the courses easier."

However, Folse also believes that not all courses are suitable for the online format. While courses in testing and evaluation or teaching second language vocabulary would work well, a methods course might not. Teaching is different than other academic subjects in that there is a presentation component. A grammar course could easily make the transition to being online, while a practicum most certainly would not.

Folse echoes Bear's sentiments concerning the appropriateness of some of the current online courses. He cautions against using technology for technology's sake. Just because it is available does not make it the most pedagogically sound way to provide an educational opportunity. "In the 1990s and to a lesser extent in the 2000s, it seems to me that there has been this rush to put things online without really thinking through whether the material matched the format. Judicious use of computer technology and Internet can enhance an MATESOL program, but it should not run the program."

Starting in August 2003, the Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics at the Monterey Institute of

The Successful Online Student

Sara Dulaney Gilbert, in her book *How to be a Successful Online Student* (McGraw-Hill 2001), offers the following advice to help you decide whether or not you can be successful as a cyber student:

▶ Can you manage yourself?
Most online learners quickly realize that the time commitment is the same, if not more, than "brick and mortar" classes. Some people believe that these courses must be easier because they do not have to go to a "classroom." The truth is often quite far from that perspective.

▶ If you don't have enough time, can you make more time?
Some options are sleeping less, shifting some household responsibilities, getting babysitting time from parents/parents-in-law, watching less television, and so on. Online learning, like all learning, requires a commitment of time. Most unsuccessful students have not been able to get the time factor in check.

▶ Are you an efficient learner?
Gilbert recommends the "Preview, View, and Review" method of learning, but many methods are quite effective. In previewing, you need to look at the big picture: When are the tests? When are the papers due? How often each week must I log on? Viewing is the actual coursework itself. Most learners will tell you that it is vital to keep up with the reading and assignments. Fall behind and you could be in serious trouble. Review all of the notes and class discussions. This also works well in studying for tests (i.e., glance at entire chapter, read it, go back over it).

International Studies (MIIS), in collaboration with the Max Kade Language and Technology Center at MIIS, will offer a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) certificate in a predominantly online format.

Accreditation

In selecting an online TESOL program, make sure it is respected. There are good online programs based in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa. A U.S.-based program should be accredited by one of the six U.S. regional accrediting bodies. It is wise to check with them if you are unfamiliar with a particular school:

- ▶ Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (info@msache.org; 215-662-5606)
- ▶ New England Association of Schools and Colleges (kwillis@neasc.org; 781-271- 0022)
- ▶ North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (info@ncacihe.org; (312-263-0456)
- ▶ Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (pjarnold@nwccu.org; (425-558-4224)
- ▶ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (dkollar@sacscoc.org; (404-679-4500)
- ▶ Western Association of Schools and Colleges (wascsr@wascsenior.org; 510-748-9001)

The only other credible general accreditor (as opposed to program-specific accreditors) of value to educators is the Distance Education and Training Council (www.detc.org). However, you should check with your school district or college to see if they accept degrees from institutions accredited by DETC. Public education, in particular, has not been welcoming to them, but I would look for that to change, particularly as some of their "higher-end" schools (Aspen University, American Military University, and The Catholic Distance University, and others) begin to become better known.

Resources

There are a number of resources about online programs. Often, it should be noted, these programs are included in larger works on distance learning. *Bears' Guide to Earning Degrees by Distance Learning* is in its fifteenth edition and is still going strong. It is the seminal work on distance learning programs. It's "daughter" book, *Bears' Guide to the Best Education Degrees by Distance Learning* lists quite a number of programs in education and TESOL around the world.

In terms of websites that offer relevant information and discussion, the most active is the DegreeInfo Website (www.degreeinfo.com). Distance learning experts regularly answer questions and debate formats, accreditation, schools, and the like. The one other large-scale site is from Peterson's (www.petersons.com), publishers of many nonfiction reference books on educational programs. A caution: They list at least one purported degree mill on their website.

Conclusion

Online learning is not for everybody. However, from all indications it is here to stay, and many people are quite happy with that. It provides greater access to higher education and increased opportunities for many pre-service and in-service teachers. Take one online course, and you might never go back to sitting in a classroom.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank John Bear, Keith Folse, Mike Lambert, and Ceri Rich-Odeh for their valuable contribution to this article. They are the experts!

Thomas Nixon is the co-author of Bears' Guide to the Best Education Degrees by Distance Learning. *Practicing what he preaches, beginning in fall 2003, he will pursue an entirely online master of education in school counseling at the University of West Alabama. He can be contacted through his website at www.tomnixon.net.*

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BINATIONAL CENTERS: Teaching English and Building Friendships in the Americas

BY WILLIAM ANCKER

For over 50 years in the major cities of Latin America, one of the most popular places for learning English has been the binational center (BNC). Originally binational centers were opened in the national capitals with funding and personnel from the United States government. As their popularity grew, local leaders in other major cities sought approval and support to open BNCs beyond the capital. Now there are almost 100 BNCs, from Hermosillo in northern Mexico to Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. All of them are autonomous and self-supporting, and still dedicated to the original goal of fostering greater friendship and understanding between the United States and the countries of Latin America.

History

The first binational center was founded in 1927 in Argentina. Soon after the end of World War II, BNCs had been established in almost every country in the region. For example, a binational center was founded in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1937; in Santiago, Chile and Lima, Peru in 1938; in Montevideo, Uruguay and Tegucigalpa, Honduras in 1939; in Caracas, Venezuela in 1941; in Asunción, Paraguay in 1942; in Guatemala City in Guatemala and San José, Costa Rica in 1945; in La Paz, Bolivia in 1946; in Medellín, Colombia and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in 1947; and in Guayaquil, Ecuador in 1951.

The older BNCs, those that have celebrated their golden anniversaries, were established with invaluable support from the United States. Textbooks and other materials provided by the U.S. embassies were used to set up programs for teaching English as a foreign language. A small cadre of American linguists, as recipients of government fellowships, served as directors of the academic departments at new centers. Large collections of books were sent to create libraries that specialized in American literature and history. Also, most BNC libraries carried a variety of popular magazines and scholarly journals published in the United States.

Since the beginning, when the Instituto Cultural Argentino Norteamericano opened its doors in downtown Buenos Aires, the primary goals of binational centers have been to strengthen friendly ties and promote mutual understanding between the United States and the host country by offering a variety of academic services and cultural programs. Most BNCs have galleries for art exhibits by local and international artists. Some of the larger centers have well-equipped theaters for plays and concerts. Some BNCs have auditoriums large enough to host conferences and seminars.

At the Instituto Chileno Norteamericano de Cultura in Santiago, U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield inaugurates an exhibit of drawings by Chilean children submitted to an Embassy/BNC-sponsored contest held for the one-year anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center. Among the guests were the ambassadors to Chile from the Philippines and Israel, and the representative from the Palestinian Authority.

For many years, BNCs functioned as a branch of the cultural affairs office of the embassy. There was a steady stream of events open to the public, such as film showings, art exhibits, and jazz concerts, sponsored by the embassy and hosted at the BNC. In fact, in the early decades, the directors of binational centers were American diplomats, often serving an additional role as assistant cultural attachés.

Services and Programs

The most important academic service offered by a BNC has always been language teaching. Typically, the revenue from English classes provides the funding for the other programs offered by the center. As demand for English has grown in recent years, many BNCs have expanded their EFL programs to include courses for adolescents and children, TOEFL preparation classes, off-site ESP training for local businesses, exams and certificates of proficiency in English (in particular those from the University of Michigan), and EFL teacher training certificates.

The scope of language teaching at many BNCs has expanded to include Spanish (or Portugese) classes for tourists and foreign residents. In some countries, the English courses taught at the BNC, and the diploma that a graduate of the BNC receives, have been recognized by ministries of public education. Many of the small private schools and academies that offer EFL classes and create competition for the BNC's English courses eagerly hire teachers who have received their TEFL training at binational centers.

Another essential educational and cultural service of a binational center is the library. Typically a BNC library specializes in American studies, offering reference materials, works of fiction and nonfiction, and current periodicals. At more than one BNC, its library is the largest English language collection in the city, or even in the entire country. In some places, the BNC library, with its circulating collection, may be the only place where readers can actually check out books and take them home.

For many years, BNC libraries have played the role of reference service for the U.S. embassy. Important local contacts in the public and private sectors, such as elected officials, members of the judiciary, and university administrators and professors, could turn to the BNC's librarians to get answers to their questions about specific aspects of the U.S. society and government. For example, a deputy to the minister of foreign affairs, planning an upcoming visit of the minister to Washington, DC, might need the contact information for the assistant to the chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Or, a university rector interested in setting up a new graduate degree in agronomy might want the names and locations of counterparts from American universities to consult on curriculum design and research facilities.

Student advising is an additional educational service provided by binational centers to people interested in studying in the United States. A well-equipped academic advising office can provide accurate and up-to-date information, including print and CD-ROM catalogs, on hundreds of American colleges and universities. Some of the larger BNCs host annual recruiting fairs where prospective students can get applications for admission and talk to representatives from American schools.

Finally, cultural activities for students are also offered at BNCs. For example, the Associação Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos in Salvador, Brazil and the Centro Ecuatoriano Norteamericano in Guayaquil, Ecuador have choirs that give public recitals. The Centro Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos in Santos, Brazil has a student drama club. Many BNCs host special events on American holidays, such as Thanksgiving and July Fourth. Some centers have cooperative relationships with institutions in the United States for exchange programs for high school and university students.

Changes

Unfortunately, U.S. embassies' funding for public diplomacy and cultural programs decreased during the 1980s and 1990s, and gradually, binational centers throughout Latin America were forced to become more self-supporting. The State Department closed the last few positions for American diplomats to serve as BNC directors, so those centers had to hire new directors locally. Embassies sponsored fewer large-scale cultural programs, such as tours by big ensembles of musicians, traveling book exhibits, and exhibits by American artists.

Support for BNC libraries was also cut. Some BNC libraries have converted entirely to electronic media and serve only as reference services and no longer offer public reading rooms or circulating collections. As information technology and electronic media have reshaped the modern library, however, many BNCs have kept pace with collections on CD-ROM, access to specialized databases, and computers linked to the Internet.

Today, there are close to 100 binational centers throughout Latin America, each one operating as an autonomous, non-profit institution for educational and cultural purposes. English language teaching remains their primary source of revenue. In general, the size of the city determines the size of the BNC. The largest metropolitan areas have the biggest centers with the best facilities. In countries where there is more than one BNC, the centers cooperate closely and pool resources. In other places, the centers maintain their independence and separate identities in the crowded marketplace for English language instruction.

In 1990, the Association of Binational Centers of Latin America (ABLA) was formed by center directors who saw the need for regular international networking among themselves. ABLA is an informal organization of BNCs throughout the region; there is no permanent headquarters. Every two years, one center hosts an ABLA conference, which features speakers and workshops on the topics most important to the success of a binational center: management of non-governmental institutions, English language teaching, libraries and information resources, and fund raising for the arts.

Notable Accomplishments

The staff at every binational center probably has many stories to tell about particularly successful events and notable achievements in their educational and cultural programs. Some unique activities and characteristics deserve special mention.

Materials development was a priority for the large Instituto Mexicano-Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales in Mexico City (IMNRC). The center wrote and published its own textbook series for teaching Spanish as a second language, which was used for years by the other BNCs in Mexico. The most ambitious and successful materials development project, however, was the creation of *In Touch* and *Lifestyles*, the former a three-level beginner series and the latter a three-level intermediate series. These ESL/EFL texts were written by four teachers from IMNRC (which unfortunately is now closed) and published in conjunction with Longman in 1980. They became best sellers around the world, with particularly strong sales in Latin America and Japan. When these books were adopted at BNCs and many other schools, they ushered in the era of communicative language teaching, in some instances against the wishes of teachers who were comfortable with their well-worn audio-lingual materials.

Binational centers can be big operations. At some of them, there is a main building and one or more branch offices with additional classroom space. For example, the BNCs in Monterrey, Mexico; Arequipa, Peru, and Asunción, Paraguay have two branches in neighboring communities. The BNC in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil has five branches. In a city as large as Sao Paulo, Brazil, there are actually two different U.S.-Brazilian binational centers, each with thousands of students.

The Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamerica in Lima, Peru (ICPNA) has two branch buildings, but the other numbers for this BNC are the most impressive. At its three sites, ICPNA has a total of 33,500 students and 360 full-time teachers. There are another 30 teachers who teach part-time and also work as academic coordinators and supervisors. Its facilities are remarkable: each of the 215 classrooms in the ICPNA system has a networked computer that the teacher uses to sign in and record grades. If a teacher doesn't sign in using the classroom computer at the beginning of class, then the academic department knows to send a substitute promptly. Also, if the teacher needs help, for example, for room maintenance or a medical emergency, the computer is used to notify the department. Finally, all the supplemental materials for the textbooks have been digitized (with the publishers' permission) and are stored on a server. In each classroom, teachers can play the appropriate audio or video segment without having to cue up a machine with a tape inside.

At those BNCs fortunate enough to have a fully-equipped theater, there is usually a busy schedule of cultural and artistic events, especially music, drama, and dance performances. For example, the Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano in San José, Costa Rica (CCCN) has excellent facilities with its 315-seat Eugene O'Neill theater and has hosted hundreds of events over the years. CCCN leaders decided that it would not be big enough, however, for what they had in mind to celebrate the center's 50th anniversary in 1995. First, they booked Grammy-award winning jazz trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, and then they rented the most historic and prestigious theater in San José for the concert. The show quickly sold out and was an exemplary instance of cross-cultural appreciation: a musician born in Cuba playing a style of music born in the United States to an enthusiastic audience of Costa Ricans.

For More Information

For readers interested in learning more about the binational centers in Latin America, there are several online sources. First, the center in Santos, Brazil has created a site with information about ABLA and a list of BNCs at http://www.abla.ccbeunet.br/index.html. Next, the Office of English Language Programs of the U.S. State Department has a separate list of BNCs at http://exchanges.state. gov/education/engteaching/eal-elp. htm. Finally, the Centro Colombo Americano in Medellín, Colombia has a virtual tour in Spanish, English, and French at http://www.colomboworld.com (click on "Quienes somos" and then on "Tour virtual CCA").

Like many other non-profit institutions that have stood the test of time, binational centers have gone through some changes in policy and personnel, from their early days with considerable financial support from the U.S. embassy to the present, when BNCs operate autonomously of the American government and are self-supporting. Despite the changes, the focus of binational centers remains the same: creating opportunities for face-to-face encounters with people from different countries to promote mutual understanding, respect, and friendship. It's a mission that fits quite well into the world of English language teaching, and throughout Latin America, BNCs remain major players in the field.

William P. Ancker is an English Language Officer with the U.S. Department of State and is currently serving as editor of English Teaching Forum *magazine.*

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Tom Riedmiller's Employment Focus

Tom's Top Ten

BY TOM RIEDMILLER

Since this is our technology issue, I thought a tech-centered column would be just the thing. Some might ask, "Tom, why another article on using the Internet for the job search?" Easy. The Web is where it's at. Besides networking (that's another column!), the Internet is one of your most important resources for your job search. So hang on tight and let's look at Tom's Top Ten websites for the ESL/EFL job search!

1. Best International Schools Site
This clickable map leads you to Yahoo's directory of schools worldwide. Just click the school you want and their employment button (Believe me, they will have an employment button.) http://web66.coled.umn.edu/schools.html

2. Best Teaching in U.S. Government Schools Site
Granted, it's the only official site, but hey! Browse to http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/ and you'll get the latest information and applications for teaching for Uncle Sam in far away romantic locations.

3. Best Job Fair Site
U.S. citizens' tax dollars are hard at work providing information about teacher recruitment fairs. This site carries a great list of links to the larger recruitment fairs and useful information about teaching overseas. http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/schools/oteaching.html

4. Best K-12 Site
This directory links you to back to Yahoo and virtually every school system on the Web and on the planet. A great start! http://web66.coled.umn.edu/schools.html

5. Best Higher Education and Intensive English Site
Higheredjobs.com (http://Higheredjobs.com) competes with the venerable Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com) for jobs in intensive English, teacher education and related fields. Postings seem to creep from the Chronicle to Higheredjobs.com. At both sites, you'll find a good number of U.S. colleges, universities and even community colleges that are advertising for ESL pros.

6. Best TEFL Site
The TEFL Professional Network (http://www.tefl.com/) is a good source for all things TEFL. Be careful, though. I tried to subscribe to their email alerts, but now I can't get off the alert list no matter how hard I try. Other good TEFL sites include http://tefl.net/ and The TEFL JOB Centre http://www.jobs.edunet.com (I love the British -re!).

7. Best Jobs in Japan Site
ELT News bills itself as "the" source for job info in Japan. I tend to agree. There are links to the JET program, universities and the ubiquitous conversation schools. For everything "Japan," go to http://www.eltnews.com/home.shtml.

8. Best Newspaper Advertisements Site
For links to newspapers and their want ads all over the world, try Onlinenewspapers.com. http://www.onlinenewspapers.com //index.htm

9. Best Professional Resource Site
If you haven't joined TESOL (http://www.tesol.org), Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, you should. TESOL's job resources and networking opportunities are second to none. Members can take advantage of TESOL's jobs e-bulletin, job workshops and jobfinder. Everyone can make use of the great FAQs and career advice.

10. Best Overall Site
Dave Sperling, creator of Dave's ESL Cafe (http://eslcafe.com), still holds the trophy for best ESL/EFL site on the Internet. Dave's site is a springboard for your job search. The job bulletin boards are active and employers post daily. Caveat: Those seeking serious academic positions will be disappointed.

Humble guy that I am, I'll admit that the websites in this column are not the be all and end all. There may be some Web heads out there who have found something even better. If so, come to my website and share your fabulous finds at http://fp.uni.edu/riedmill/jobpage.htm.

Tom Riedmiller teaches in the Culture and Intensive English Program at the University of Northern Iowa. You can reach him via his webpage http://fp.uni.edu/riedmill.

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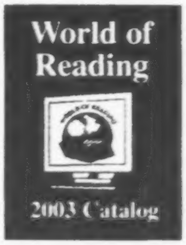

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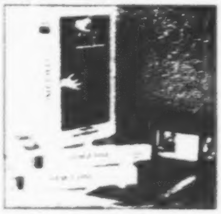

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6. What dollar amount (U.S.) of ESL materials/services do you purchase each year?
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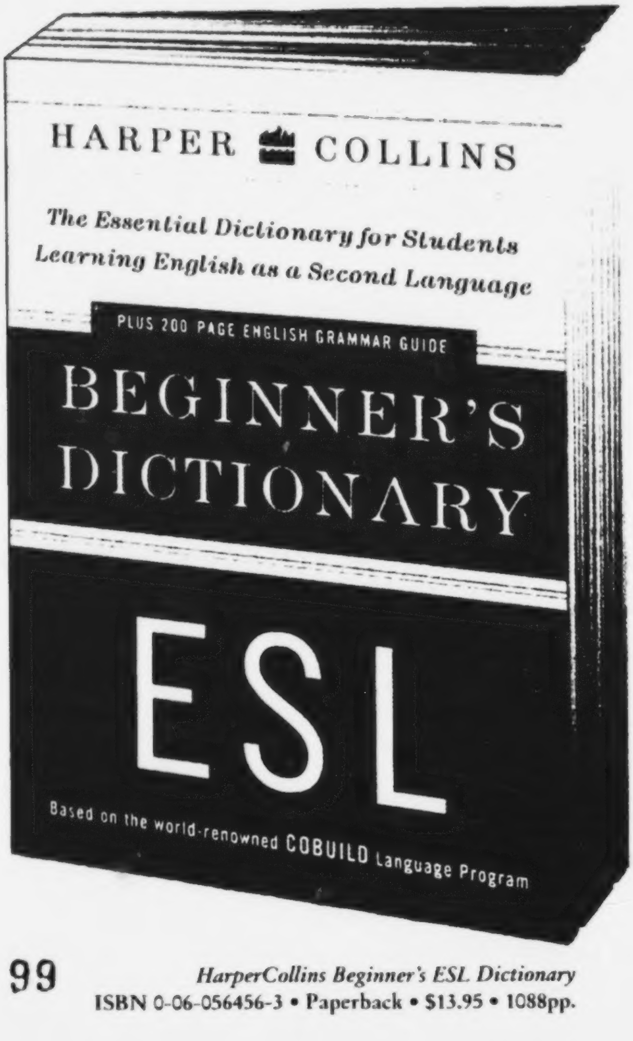
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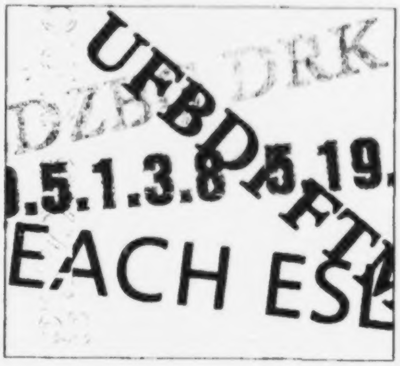

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Who's Reading *ESL Magazine*?

Francisco Hernandez
Regional Coordinator for Migrant/ELL Services at the Northwest Regional Education Service District in Hillsboro, OR. The NWRESD supports 20 school districts, including 6,135 migrant students and 23,475 ELL students.

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Family literacy—a foundation for success

We know that family is an influential factor in many students' success in school. David Red describes how various family literacy programs geared toward English language learners provide parents with language and life skills, which give entire families greater hope for and access to success in the future.

Paul Nation shares excellent ideas about helping ESL/EFL students build their vocabularies in English. You'll find his article practical and ready-to-use!

My friend and colleague, Lee Oakes, usually gives me a cryptogram for my birthday in August, which I always celebrate like it's a national holiday. This August I asked her to join me in writing about cryptograms for the ESL/EFL classroom. The results of our efforts are in this issue.

Would like to hear more of your students' opinions in the classroom? Would you like your students to get along well, even when they have diverse backgrounds and world views? You'll find wonderful insights for creating "congenial classrooms" in Kirsten Schaetzel's article.

All the best!

Marilyn Rosenthal

Marilyn Rosenthal
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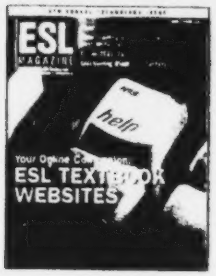

Write Us! *Send letters to eslmagazine@cs.com or ESL Magazine, 220 McKendree Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401. Include your name and position or address.*

ESL Textbook Companion Websites

▶ Thank you for Murray and Reagan's excellent "one-stop" listing of publishers' companion websites. I've never used companion website materials before. I visited some of the sites listed in the article and liked what I saw. I plan to do more research and perhaps steer our program toward using materials that have all these online resources to go with them.

—A. PHILIPS
Seattle, WA

Sperling's Guide to Internet Writing Resources

▶ Dave Sperling is right—the Internet will not go away, and I'm glad! It offers so many resources to teachers. I feel very fortunate to be teaching in the "Information Age." Dave's list of writing resources will be most helpful. It will be near my desk at all times, for work and for fun!

—ELIZABETH KERR
Vancouver, B.C.

▶ How long before you publish "Dave's Sperling's Guide to the Internet's Best *Reading* Resources" and "Dave's Sperling's Guide to the Internet's Best *Listening* Resources"?

—P. ANDRIANOS
Syracuse, NY

Online TESL/TEFL Training

▶ Thomas Nixon's article on online TESL/TEFL training was informative and helpful. I hope more state educational agencies will follow Florida's lead and help teachers get the credentials they need in an affordable way, both in terms of time and money. There are many ESL students who need qualified teachers and many teachers who need more qualifications. Hopefully, online training will help with the teacher shortage.

—WILLIAM GRIEST
Wildwood, NJ

Binational Centers

▶ Thank you for William Ancker's article about binational centers. These nonprofit organizations are accomplishing great things in Latin America. The article is an excellent reminder that friendships between nations need cultivating. This can happen through a variety of means including language instruction, libraries, the arts and other cultural activities. ESL/EFL teachers worldwide should view their classrooms as "multinational centers" in which students build friendships through language learning and many other means.

—M. JONES
Oak Park, IL

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New Prizes for Excellence in International Education

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Conference Calendar

July

- 10-11 **Paraguay TESOL**. Asuncion, Paraguay. Contact Andrea Amanilla Saguier, andreaccpa@yahoo.com.
- 31 August 2 **Japan Association for Language Education and Technology (LET)**. Osaka, Japan. E-mail PFB01373@nifty.ne.jp.

August

- 23-25 **URUTESOL. 2003 TESOL Southern Cone Regional Convention**. Montevideo, Uruguay. Contact urutesol2001@yahoo.com.

September

- 24-27 **Louisiana TESOL**. New Orleans, LA. Contact Susan Ary, sary@tulane.edu.
- 26-28 **Panama TESOL**. Panama City, Panama. Contact Carlos Prescott, 507-221-5595.

October

- 3-5 **IATEFL**. Budapest, Hungary. Contact Eszter Falus, eszter.falus@iatefl.hu.
- 10-12 **INGED-Turkey, BETA-Romania, ETAI-Israel and TESOL-Greece Joint Conference**. Ankara, Turkey. Contact taseda@softhome.net.
- 17-18 **Washington Area TESOL (WATESOL)**. Annandale, VA. Contact www.watesol.org.
- 17-18 **Wisconsin TESOL (WITESOL)**. Eau Claire, WI. Contact Beth Kozbial Ernst, ernstbk@uwec.edu.
- 18 **California TESOL (CATESOL)**. San Diego, CA. Contact www.catesol.org.
- 18-19 **Korea TESOL (KOTESOL)**. Seoul, South Korea. Contact Yangdon Ju, ydju@hcc.ac.kr.
- 25 **California TESOL (CATESOL)**. Pomona, CA. Contact www.catesol.org.
- 31-1 **Michigan TESOL (MITESOL)**. Ann Arbor, MI. Contact: Jennifer Warren-Craft, 248-942-3184.

November

- 1 **Northern Regional CATESOL**. Canada Com. College. Contact: kararosenberg@earthlink.net
- 1 **Indiana TESOL**. Indianapolis, IN. Contact conference@intesol.org.
- 1-2 **Washington TESOL (WAESOL)**. Seattle, WA. Contact 509-335-3431.
- 6-8 **Texas TESOL (TEXTESOL)**. Austin, TX. Contact www.textesol.org.
- 7-8 **Colorado TESOL (COTESOL)**. Denver, CO. Contact larry.fisher@colorado.edu
- 7-9 **New York TESOL (NYS TESOL)**. New York, New York. Contact 212-678-3074.
- 8 **Oregon TESOL (ORTESOL)**. Portland, OR. Contact www.ortesol.org.
- 13-15 **TESL Canada (BCTEAL)**. Burnaby, BC, Canada. Contact 604-736-6330.
- 14-15 **Ohio TESOL**. Columbus, OH. Contact dordick.1@osu.edu.
- 21-22 **Italy TESOL**. Rome. Contact tesol@usis.it.
- 21-22 **TESOL France**. Paris, France. Contact tesol@enst.fr.
- 21-22 **Puerto Rico TESOL**. San Juan, Puerto Rico. Contact tesol@puertoricotesol.org.
- 28-30 **EgypTESOL**. Cairo, Egypt. Contact www.egyptesol.org.
- 30-1 **TESOL Greece**. Athens, Greece. Contact catskin@otenet.gr.

December

- 2-5 **Asia CALL International**. Bangkok, Thailand. Contact www.asiacall.org.

January 2004

- 29-31 **Thailand TESOL**. Khonhaen, Thailand. Contact www.thaitesol.org.
- 29-31 **TESOL Ukraine**. Donestska Oblast, Ukraine. Contact www.tesol-ua.org.

National Recognition for IEP Accrediting Agency

The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) announced in June that it has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an official accrediting body for intensive English programs (IEPs) in the United States. CEA received a two-year recognition. U.S. law requires international students to attend certified schools. Now IEPs can be certified by an accreditation agency specializing in the field of English language education and administration. The CEA began as an advisory committee within the association Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) in 1995. The advisory committee developed standards for IEPs and proposed the organization of an accrediting body for IEPs. In 1999, CEA became an organization independent from TESOL but received a grant and loan from TESOL to begin.

Free Website Helps Adults Learn English

English for All is a free, web-based multimedia program for adult English learners at the high beginning level. The program has been developed by the Division of Adult Career Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District and is funded through the U.S. Department of Education. It includes video, CD-ROM, instructional website and print materials. Students can work through five different stories and 20 episodes. For each episode, students are presented with activities for building linguistic and social/cultural skills. www.myefa.org/login.cfm

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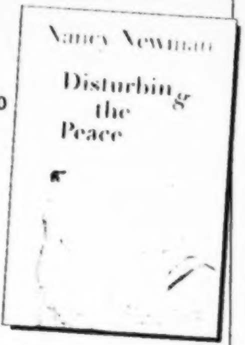

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—*ESL Magazine, July/August 2002*

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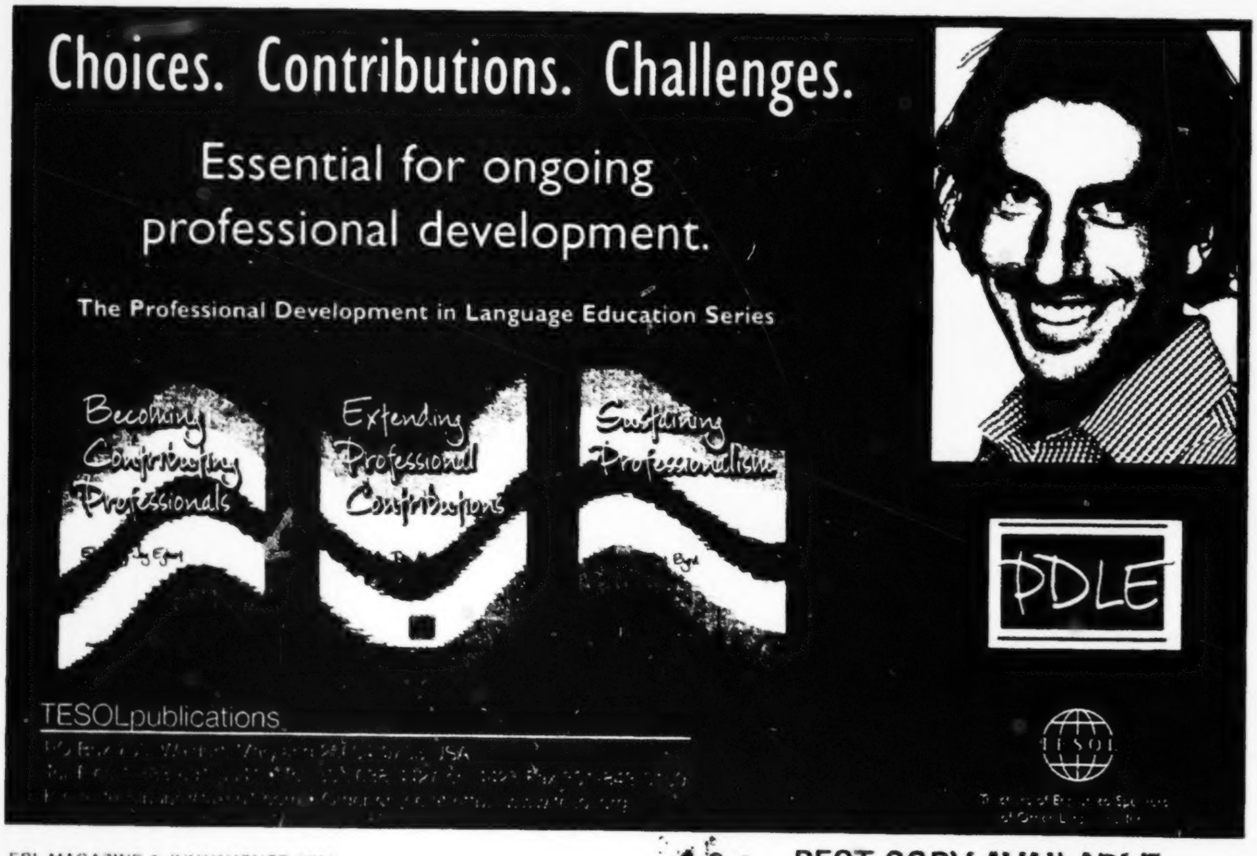
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Web Resources for Creating Family Trees

To help students master the vocabulary of family relationships, ESL/EFL teachers frequently make use of family tree charts. They create their own family trees as models, and then ask students to make their own personal charts. The World Wide Web is an excellent resource for finding suitable materials for this activity. Teachers can find free downloadable charts at numerous sites on the Web.

The Family Tree Magazine at http://www.familytreemagazine.com/forms/download.html provides a simple five-generation ancestor chart. If more than five generations need to be recorded, two charts can be printed out. Family terms need to be filled in but the phrases "birthdate and place," "marriage date and place," and "death date and place" are printed under the line for each individual on the chart.

The Pellaart site at http://www.pellaart.com offers two family tree charts. One is a standard chart, and the other is in the shape of a tree. Family vocabulary is printed on both.

The Ancestors website of Brigham Young University at http://www.byubroadcasting.org/ancestors/charts/ has both a standard chart and a family group record chart, both in PDF format.

The Tree Maker site at http://www.thetreemaker.com/samples.html sells customized charts, but it also gives visitors ideas about ways to design family trees. It shows ten blank charts including a nine-generation fan chart, a seven-generation bow-tie chart, five- and six-generation charts, and five- and four-generation couples charts. These blank charts can be printed out.

The Family Tree Magazine site also offers materials that teachers can assign to students as preparatory work. For example, before filling out a family tree, students can complete "family group sheets" for nuclear families and/or complete biographical outlines for individual family members.

Another interesting form at the magazine's site is the "Time Capsule" that includes a list of future-oriented questions such as "What great new invention do you foresee being created in the next 50 years?" or "What problems do you think will still be around 75 years from now? Which ones will we have been able to solve by then?" While this is not directly related to family trees, it encourages students to think about how the world changes from generation to generation.

Christine Meloni is a professor of EFL and a senior research associate at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. She welcomes comments and suggestions from readers. She can be reached at meloni@gwu.edu.

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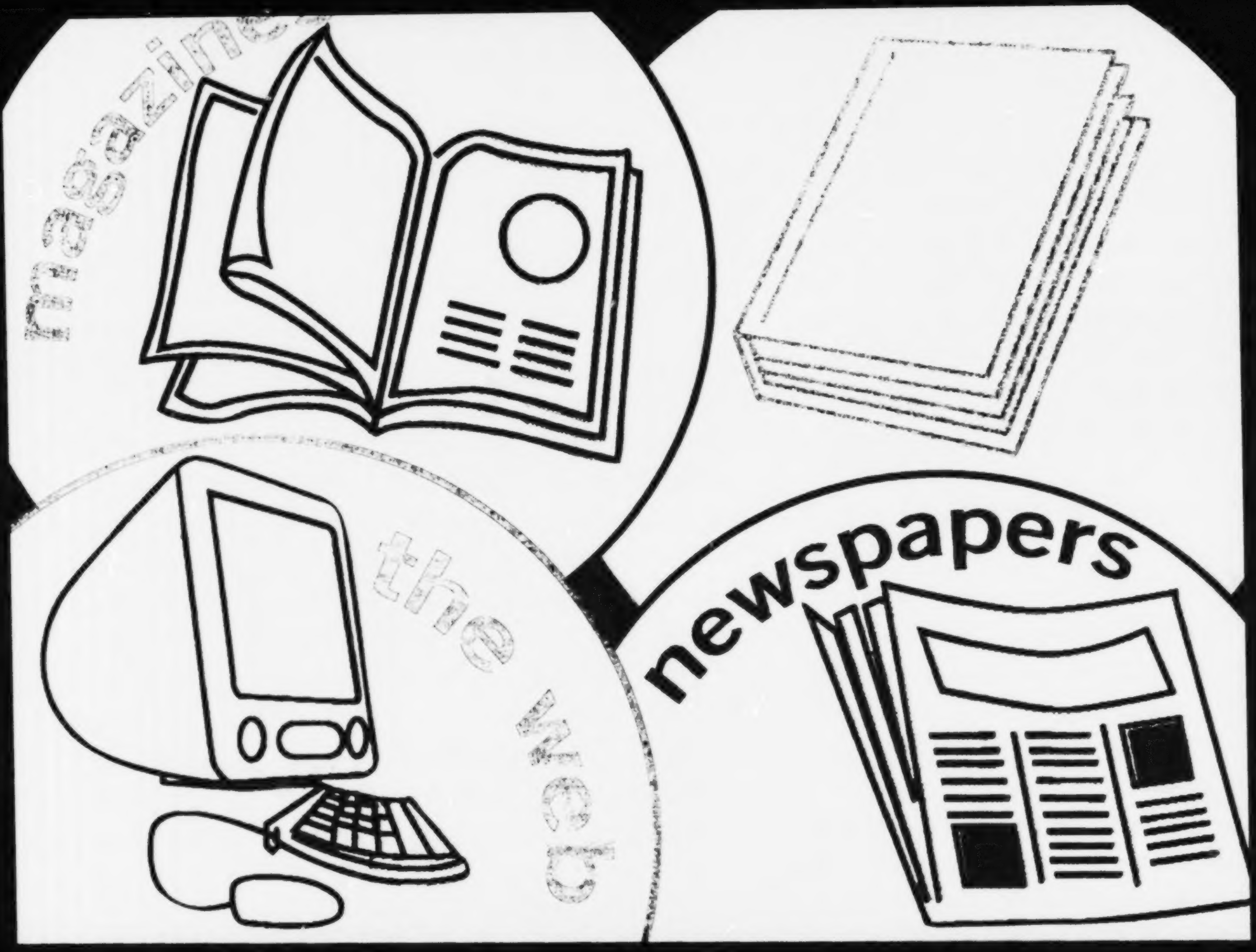

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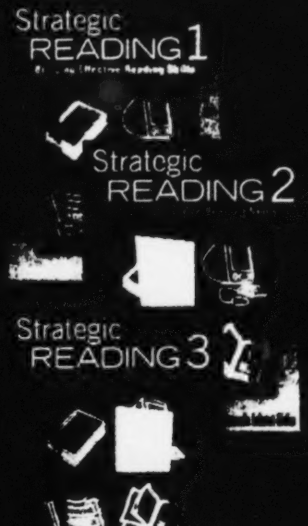

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Family Literacy and ESL

BY DAVID L. RED

Family literacy is a term that has been in use since at least the 1980s. It is also referred to as intergenerational literacy or two-generation programs. In the United States, family literacy began in Kentucky among American-born women who had little formal education and who often had children at a young age. A four-part model of family literacy was developed to meet the needs of these women. This model is now enshrined in several laws in the United States, for example, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Head Start Act and others.

Congress defines family literacy in terms of services. These services must be of sufficient intensity (in terms of hours) and duration to make substantial changes in a family and must integrate the following four components:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children [parent and child interaction time (PACT)].
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency (adult basic education), and
- Age-appropriate education to prepare children (from birth to age eight) for success in school and life experiences.

Family literacy began as a program for native English-speaking Americans and has evolved and been adapted for ESL learners.

Types of Family Literacy Programs

In the United States, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), a nonprofit corporation established in 1989, has been the leader in promoting family literacy. It recognizes that not all programs are the same. According to information on its website (http://www.famlit.org/media/pfacts. html), family literacy falls into two broad categories: comprehensive family literacy programs and family-centered (or family-focused) literacy programs. The first type, the comprehensive program, provides intensive services that integrate the four components outlined in the laws of the U.S. Congress. This type of program is frequently referred to as the Kenan Trust Model (Edmiaston & Fitzgerald 2003). Federally-funded Even Start programs must follow this model.

Programs of the second type, family-centered programs, tend to be placed within a larger program context and can be broken into three basic categories: family-centered *childhood* education, family-centered *adult* education, and family-centered *parent* education. These types of programs provide some of the four basic services outlined by Congress, but not all. The focus of instruction differs among these programs. Family-centered childhood education provides childhood education and parent training, and maybe PACT, but it does not provide adult basic education. Family-centered adult education provides adult basic education and parent training, and maybe PACT, but it does not provide childhood education. The program provides services directly to the parent with the intention of reaching the child through the parent. Family-centered parent education provides parent training and PACT, but normally lacks childhood and adult basic education. The purpose of this type of program is to teach "parents to implement activities at home that will improve their children's early literacy knowledge" (Paratore 2003).

Issues in Family Literacy

According to the NCFL, it has "focused the national attention on the critical link between undereducation and poverty through training, research and advocacy. The correlation between undereducated parents and the potential failure of their children in school is well-documented.... Adults who lack basic skills need special assistance to break out of the cycle of undereducation and poverty" (http://www.famlit.org/media/pfacts.html). These simple statements have given rise to very different interpretations of the role of family literacy and the way it is presented to participants.

Auerbach (1995) suggested that there are three approaches to family literacy, each of which takes a different perspective on the participants and the program (see sidebar). The first is the intervention-prevention approach, the second is the multiple-literacies perspective, and the third is the social change perspective. The major difference among these three models is the view taken of the participants' role in society and their ability to contribute to their own learning and improve their situation.

Family Literacy and ESL

Nowadays, however, family literacy programs are often for immigrant families, many of whom do not have the same needs as those in early programs. As a result, family literacy for English language learners has often had to shift its emphasis to developing English language skills for the parents and helping them understand and negotiate the American school system in which their children are enrolled. Also, many of these parent participants have had education in their home countries and may not need a high school diploma. For reasons such as these, the four-part model has been amended in many programs, but not done away with because of federal restraints on money.

Two family literacy programs that support ESL learners have been described in the literature. The first is the Intergenerational Literacy Project described by Paratore (2001). This program supports the literacy development of parents, helps parents support their children's literacy development at home, and provides parents with information about school culture and ways to help their children in school. It does not directly involve children in its program but instead focuses on the parents. Project FLAME as described by Rodriquez-Brown (2003) is similar. It is based on certain assumptions: "a supportive home environment is essential to early literacy development, the belief that parents can have a positive effect on children's learning, and the knowledge that, if parents are confident and successful learners, they will be the most effective teachers to their children" (Rodriquez-Brown 2003, 129). This program does not bring the children into the training but focuses much of its instruction on helping parents help their children. It also encourages parents to become volunteers in their children's schools.

The question of native-language literacy is also an issue in ESL family literacy courses. Some programs do encourage nonliterate learners to learn to read in their native language, but the vast majority of family literacy programs teach literacy in English. Both Project FLAME and the Intergenerational Literacy Project follow this practice.

One Program's Solution

The Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) office in Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia has a family literacy component. It can best be described as family-centered adult education and includes adult ESOL education, parenting and PACT. These classes are taught in the afternoon or evenings in elementary schools and classes are free for family members of children in the elementary schools. The learners come from many different language backgrounds and come to learn spoken English and English literacy.

The program currently has a family literacy specialist who coordinates all activities in the program. With the help of federal and other grant funds, this program reaches out to the parents and other family members of the English language learners enrolled in school. The classes for adult learners are two hours long and meet twice a week. The children who accompany their family members to these classes spend the first hour and a half with care providers, who normally engage the children in learning activities. Some schools use teachers as care providers, others use volunteers, and still others use paid childcare providers. Arrangements for caring for the children are left to the individual schools.

The adult family members receive English language instruction for one and a half hours using various materials provided by the program. According to the expressed needs of the learners, materials may include picture dictionaries, English language textbooks, or a specially written curriculum focusing on English literacy and civics education (EL/Civics). The latter curriculum includes lessons on the school and the community, health and consumerism. This curriculum was written for multi-level classes. Where available, computers are used to enhance the instruction, and the EL/Civics curriculum includes specific exercises using the Internet and other technology sources.

For the last half hour of class, the parents and the children come together for a shared activity such as alphabet bingo or shared books. In one class, adults drew the outline of the children's bodies on large pieces of paper, and the adults and children labeled the body parts as part of a health lesson. Each family literacy class has a library of commercial children's books that come with tapes. Parents are encouraged to check these books out and take them home to share with their children. Even if parents are unable to read the English, they and their children can listen and read along.

Teaching parents how to share books with their children is a critical component of the family literacy program. Even when family members lack the literacy skills to read English, they can share rich language experiences with their children. One of the pervasive myths in education is that parents have to speak English with their children to improve their chances in school, but nothing could be further from the truth when English is a new language for the parents. Instead, the program encourages parents to talk to their children in their native language because that is the medium through which knowledge is passed from generation to generation and the medium for future literacy development. Research has shown that "regardless of all the other differences found between families (education level, parents' intelligence quotients [IQs], socioeconomic level, and/or race), the best predictor of academic performance was the sheer amount of talk that was directed at the babies" (Enz 2003, 51). The participants in the family literacy program are encouraged to spend time talking to their children, sharing their stories with them. In class they are given practice in using picture books to tell stories.

The parenting aspect of the program is primarily a discussion of school culture and school requirements. The participants are usually mothers and sometimes other family members. They tend to come to the program when the children reach school age, and many have been in America for several years but have come to realize their need for English when their children enter school. The nonEnglish-speaking family members are most concerned with how they can help their children with school. The teachers in the program encourage parents to have rich discussions with their children about school and to provide them a quiet environment for study. The family literacy classes prepare parents for parent-teacher conferences through role play and demonstration. The school system provides translators for these conferences, but the classes provide parents with information about what teachers expect and prepare parents to communicate with teachers.

One of the benefits of the family literacy program is the adults' involvement in the school and community. Family members who participate in the classes often become volunteers at the school and become active members of the school community. They are introduced to the public library system by taking class trips together, and many of them get library cards for the first time. They learn how to use the Internet to access important community information on local health clinics, parks and recreation, the department of motor vehicles, etc.

With the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act, which has a strong emphasis on literacy skills for LEP children, the Fairfax County Public Schools Family Literacy program is looking for ways to further integrate K-12 education with adult education. The program is planning staff development for family literacy teachers that focuses on literacy acquisition of adults and children and the kinds of activities that can be done to help adults learn to help their children. The adult program is also strengthening ties

Three Approaches to Family Literacy

Intervention Prevention

- ▶ Stresses correlation between undereducated parents and potential failure of their children.
- ▶ Suggests undereducated parents are unable "to promote positive literacy attitudes and interactions in the home" (Auerbach 1995, 644).
- ▶ Suggests problems with America's social and economic systems are rooted in the family, not in the greater society.
- ▶ Suggests family literacy classes are way to change family behaviors and attitudes.
- ▶ Programs often teach parents ways to read to their children, and also improve their parenting skills.

Multiple-Literacies

- ▶ Sees problem that families have with literacy and schooling as a "mismatch between culturally variable home literacy practices and school literacies; it sees the solution as investigating and validating students' multiple literacies and cultural resources in order to inform schooling" (Auerbach 1995, 651).
- ▶ Sees participants in programs bringing with them home practices that are rich and varied and should be valued by mainstream as valid practices upon which to build.
- ▶ Sees rich language interactions in home as points of departure rather than practices to be eliminated.
- ▶ Sees culture of participants as bridge to culture of mainstream.
- ▶ Sees participants involved in creating curriculum, and having curricular materials that are culturally familiar.

Social Changes

- ▶ Social change perspective is similar to multiple-literacies perspective, but goes beyond culture to address issues of power.
- ▶ At heart of perspective is idea "that problems of marginalized people originate in a complex interaction of political, social, and economic factors in the broader society rather than in family inadequacies or differences between home and school cultures" (Auerbach 1995, 654).
- ▶ Social context must be focus of change in this view, not individuals.
- ▶ Follows principles of Paolo Friere (1981), who advocates for social change as goal of education.

with the K-12 ESOL system to ensure that the childcare provided during classes will provide the children with the pre-literacy and literacy training that will enhance their chances of success in school.

The family literacy program is also introducing standardized assessment for its participants to meet the requirements of adult education. A grant allowed the program to purchase four laptop computers, which will be used to administer the computer-based Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus assessment.

Future Directions in Family Literacy

The changes in K-12 education brought about by the No Child Left Behind Act and the changes that will likely be introduced in the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act that outlines and funds many adult education programs will affect family literacy programs. Even Start has been strengthened in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and will likely be a major source of funding for family literacy. Even Start has requirements that anyone considering applying for funds must meet. For example, Even Start must run year-round and not just during the school year. Even Start federal funds diminish each year of a grant and local funds must increase, so a provider must seek those funds from the outset.

Head Start is another program that is likely to see changes in the future. Currently, Head Start is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and focuses on the whole child. The 1998 reauthorization of Head Start mandated that the program promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of low-income children. Recently, President Bush has asked that Head Start become more of a literacy program and that providers receive literacy training. This request has stirred some apprehension and opposition among Head Start providers, and the matter is yet to play out completely.

Title III of the Elementary and Secondary School Act is one source of funding that will become important in family literacy. It states that funds may be used for "family literacy services and parent outreach and training activities to limited English proficient children and their families to assist parents in helping their children to improve their academic achievement and to become active participants in the education of their children." This is new money for family literacy, so schools are just beginning to use these funds. These are some of the funds that the Fairfax County Public Schools Family Literacy program hopes to use to further its outreach to adult family members of elementary children who are learning English.

Family literacy shows great promise as a means to help immigrant family members and their children to succeed in their new country. Stable funding and innovative practices will both help to establish family literacy as a viable form of education in the new century. ESL researchers and practitioners should be a major voice in the development of family literacy for ESL populations.

David Red is the coordinator for adult ESOL for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia.

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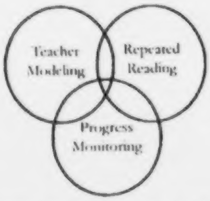

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EFFECTIVE WAYS OF BUILDING VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

BY PAUL NATION

In vocabulary learning, it is important to have a good balance of incidental and deliberate learning opportunities. In incidental learning, the learner focuses mainly on communicating or interpreting a message, and vocabulary is learned without being the focus of the activity. Most of a language program should involve such message-based activities. However, another kind of learning, deliberate learning, also has an important part to play in a well-balanced course. Deliberate vocabulary learning involves focusing on words and consciously trying to learn them. Deliberate teaching is one way of encouraging deliberate learning, but ideally most deliberate learning should be under the control of the learner. Learners should take responsibility for their own vocabulary learning, and the teacher's responsibility is to show students effective ways of learning and to help them become proficient in the most useful strategies. Three useful strategies for the deliberate learning of vocabulary are using word cards, studying word parts and using dictionaries.

Using Word Cards

The most effective of these strategies is learning from word cards. Learning words from cards involves writing a word on one side of a small card (about 1" x 2") and writing its first language translation on the other side. The cards are kept in packs held together by a rubber band, and when the learner has a few free moments, he goes through the cards recalling the meanings.

This way of learning vocabulary is just one of the first steps in learning a word. There are several reasons for this. First, there is more to knowing a word than knowing its translation. Second, learning a word is usually a cumulative process rather than a one-time event. Finally, words not only have to be known, they have to be readily available for use. However, learning the translation of a new word is a very good step towards knowing that word.

Research on vocabulary learning provides useful indications of how learning from vocabulary cards can be done most effectively (Nation 2001). Students should be taught to follow these instructions when using word cards:

1. Write the word to be learned on one side of the card and its translation on the other side. Each time you use the card, look at the new word and try to recall its meaning. Since the word and its meaning are not written side by side, the meaning must be retrieved from memory. Each retrieval strengthens the connection between the form of the word and its meaning (Baddeley 1990). Seeing them both together does not do this.

2. Initially start with small packs of cards—about 15 or 20 words. Difficult items should be learned in small groups to allow more repetition and more thoughtful processing. As the learning gets easier increase the size of the pack. More than 50 seems to be unmanageable simply for keeping the cards together and getting through them at one time.

3. Space the repetitions. The best spacing is to go through the cards a few minutes after first looking at them, and then an hour or so later, and then the next day, and then a week later, and then a couple of weeks later. This spacing is much more effective than massing the repetitions together into an hour of study. The total time taken may be the same but the result is different. Spaced repetition results in longer lasting learning.

4. For words which are difficult to learn, use depth of processing techniques like the keyword technique (see sidebar "The Keyword Technique"). Other helpful techniques are thinking of the word in language contexts and situational contexts, breaking the word into word parts, or using a simple picture. The more associations you can make with an item, the better it will be remembered.

5. Make sure that words of similar spelling or of related meaning are not together in the same pack of cards. This means days of the week should not be all learned at the same time. The same applies to months of the year, numbers, opposites, words with similar meanings, and words with the same superordinate such as items of clothing, names of fruit, parts of the body, and things in the kitchen. These items interfere with each other and make learning much more difficult (Nation 2000).

6. Keep changing the order of the words in the pack. This will avoid serial learning where the meaning of one word reminds you of the meaning of the next word in the pack.

7. Say the word aloud to yourself. This helps the form to enter long term memory.

8. Also write collocates of the words on the card where this is helpful. This particularly applies to verbs. Some words are most usefully learned in a phrase.

Studying Word Parts

Studying word parts is another way to build vocabulary and another way of linking the form of a word and its meaning. Let's say that the learner wants to learn the word *collocate*. First the learner needs to find out what the word means by looking it up in the dictionary or asking someone. Secondly, the learner needs to look at the word to see if it has any known parts. In *collocate* the double "l" is a good clue to where word parts meet. *Collocate* has three parts: *com—loc—ate*. *Com-* means "together" or "with," and *loc* means "place." Thirdly, the learner needs to restate the meaning of the word so that it contains the meaning of the word parts: "to *collocate* means to be placed together typically with another word." This restatement of the meaning may sometimes be a bit clumsy, but its value is that it strongly connects the meaning of the word to its parts. When the word is seen again, its meaning will be more readily recalled. Note the following things about this technique:

1. It is a way of remembering the meaning of words, not of guessing their meaning. Using word parts to guess meaning has a low success rate.

2. To use the technique the learners must know the most useful prefixes (see sidebar "Common Prefixes"). There are only about 20 very common ones that are needed to begin with. Learners must have some practice in recognizing them in words and must be able to look up the meaning of a word in a dictionary and restate it using the meaning of the prefix. Teachers can help learners gain this knowledge.

Because about 60% of the words of English come from French, Latin or Greek, many words have prefixes and suffixes. This technique of using word parts can thus be used very often. Unfortunately learners' dictionaries do not give the etymology of words and thus high intermediate and advanced learners may find it useful to have a dictionary that does this.

Using a Dictionary

There are three kinds of dictionaries that a second or foreign language learner could use. Monolingual dictionaries are all in the second language, that is, the meanings are given in the second language. The famous learner dictionaries like the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* are all monolingual dictionaries. The problem with monolingual dictionaries is that learners need a vocabulary of at least 2,000 words to be able to understand the definitions. However, they contain a large amount of very useful information about the meaning and use of words.

Bilingual dictionaries use the learners' first language to give the meanings of the words. This makes them easy to understand and thus bilingual dictionaries are very popular among learners in the early stages of language learning. Bilingual dictionaries differ greatly in quality, but they are a very important learning tool.

A less common but very useful dictionary is the bilingualized dictionary. Usually this is a monolingual dictionary that has the first language meanings of the words added to it. Thus it can combine the best features of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries.

Research on dictionary use indicates that learners tend to use dictionaries in limited ways, not making the best use of the wide range of information that the good ones contain. Here are some ways to help learners make good use of dictionaries.

1. Before looking up a word which has been met in reading or listening, try to guess what the word might mean from the context clues. This will help when having to choose a particular sense listed in the dictionary.

2. When looking up the meaning of a word, look at all the senses that are given and see if there is a common underlying meaning running through the different senses. For example, *interpret* can mean (1) to explain the meaning of a difficult text, (2) to understand the purpose of something such as a gesture, (3) to translate from one language to another, (4) to convey the spirit of a work of art as in interpreting a dance. All of these share the meaning of "carry the meaning of something from one form to another." Seeing this underlying meaning then makes the range of uses of the word accessible to the learner.

3. When the meaning has been found, look at the example sentences containing the word in the dictionary and try to visualize the meaning of these sentences. Also think of a situation in which you might use these sentences.

4. When using your own dictionary, put a small mark next to the word to show that you have looked it up. If you find that you look up the same word again, it is clearly a good idea to put this word on a word card and deliberately learn it.

5. Some dictionaries have frequency markers next to the most useful words. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* uses letters and numbers (S1 means the word is in the first 1,000 words of spoken English, W3 means in the third 1,000 words of written English). The *COBUILD* dictionary uses diamonds—more black diamonds means a more frequent and useful word. These markers provide a very useful guide to the value of spending time deliberately learning a particular word. Learners should be helped to become skilful at interpreting these markers and acting on the information.

The three strategies we have looked at —word cards, word parts, and dictionary use—are all ways of giving deliberate attention to vocabulary. Deliberate attention speeds up learning. These strategies require some investment of time by both the teacher and learners. It is not enough to know about them. They need to be practiced until they become easy to use.

Paul Nation is director of the MA/PhD and distance programs in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. His research interests are the teaching and learning of vocabulary and language teaching methodology.

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Common Prefixes

These are the most common English prefixes. Though not always regular, they are a good first list to learn for the word part strategy.

ab-	from, away	abstract	non-	not	nonviolent
ad-	to(ward)	advertise	ob-	against	oppose
com-	with, together	confuse	over-	above	overcome
de-	down, away	deduct	per-	through	perforate
dis-	not	dislike	pre-	before	prejudge
dis-	apart, away	distance	pro-	forward	propose
ex-	out, beyond	express	pro-	in favor of	progovernment
in-	not	inconsistent	re-	back, again	redirect
in-	in(to)	instruct	sub-	under	support
inter-	between	intermission	trans-	across	transport
mis-	wrong(ly)	misdirect	un-	not	unable

The Keyword Technique

The keyword technique is a very useful way of helping words to stay in memory because it provides links between form (the written or spoken form of the word) and meaning. Numerous experiments on the keyword technique for learning foreign vocabulary have shown that the technique increases the efficiency of vocabulary learning by around twenty-five percent. Except in a few predictable cases, the technique has no negative effects on pronunciation or spelling of words learned by this technique.

There are four parts to the technique. Parts one and two constitute the "form link," three and four, the "meaning link":

1. The foreign word
2. First language keyword which sounds like the foreign word
3. Mental image of the meaning of the keyword and foreign word
4. Meaning of the foreign word

In the following example, the four parts are numbered to match the four parts of the technique. When learning the word *cite* (1) meaning "to quote or refer to" (4), a Javanese learner of English might use the keyword *sae* (2) which means "good." The image (3) could be someone being told they are good because they cited someone's work well.

1. cite
2. *sae*
3. good citing
4. quote or refer to

The keyword technique works because it makes learners process more than one feature of a word, and this processing is not superficial in the way that rote repetition is superficial. The only limit is the learner's imagination!

The keyword does not have to sound exactly like the foreign word to be learned, and it does not have to be like all of the word. If the form of the keyword is like the beginning of the foreign word, then that is usually enough.

Learners need to practice thinking of keywords for at least ten different foreign words under the guidance of the teacher. Explaining the technique to learners is not enough. The technique need not be used with every word, only those that prove difficult to remember.

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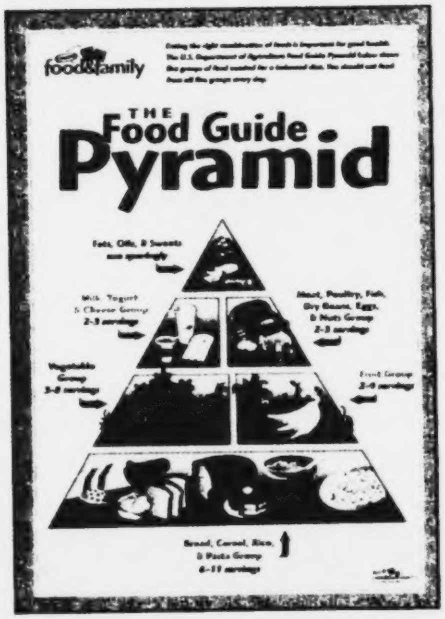

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Richard Firsten

The Grammar Guy

Let's Keep it Together

Dear Richard: I teach ESOL part time, but I don't understand what's going on with hyphenation. Sometimes I see things I think should be hyphenated, but they aren't; other times I see the same things, and they are. I'm getting confused about when we should hyphenate and when we don't have to. Can you please explain this? Thanks for your help. Oh, I really enjoy your column!

—"Mr. Dash," Chicago, IL

Thanks a lot, "Mr. Dash"! Here are the four basic rules of thumb. We traditionally hyphenate in English:

- in compound numbers between 21 and 99: twenty-one/ninety-nine
- in some compound noun phrases: mother-in-law/jack-o'-lantern
- in phrases with two or more words that are used as one adjectival unit: a part-time job/a four-year-old child/state-of-the-art technology
- in between syllables when dividing the last word at the end of a line: divid-ing/col-laborate/tradi-tion

Compare *He has a part-time job* with *He works part time*. "Part time" isn't hyphenated in the second sentence because it isn't being used as an adjectival unit before its noun; it's being used adverbially. Also notice that in English, the hyphen is "suspended" in the middle of the space separating the syllables or words. In some languages, the hyphen sits right on the line. So if you see some of your students writing that way, don't think there's something wrong with them!

When dealing with compound numbers or hyphenated adjectival units, I tell my students that the hyphen is a way of telling readers to consider all the words connected by the hyphens as single elements. When we speak, we say these hyphenated phrases out loud as if they were single items. Try saying the first five examples above out loud; you'll notice how your stress and intonation communicate that the hyphenated parts are like single adjectives.

As for our last issue's "Food for Thought:" How would you explain the difference between *dish* and *plate*? *Ground* and *land*? *Large* and *big*? *Small* and *little*? Jerome Fagan of Austin, TX sent in this response: "*Dish* and *plate* can mean the same thing. *Dish*, however, can also mean some prepared food, e.g., chicken mole is a Mexican dish. When we think of *ground*, we think of the surface, what we can see and stand on; *land*, on the other hand, is used for two basic meanings, to differentiate it from the sea or ocean, and as something that can be divided up and bought or sold. *Large* is usually used for concrete things (a large room) and *big* for abstract things (a big idea). The same holds true for *small*, which is concrete (a small house), and *little*, which is abstract (a little problem). We also use *big* and *little* idiomatically to mean a child's age or behavior (a big boy, a little girl)."

You did a wonderful job, Jerome. Thank you very much! Now for this issue's "Food for Thought." You're in a waiting room and you overhear the receptionist say on the phone, "There's a Mr. Jensen on line three for you." Why did the receptionist say *a*? Please send in your answers as soon as possible. As always, I love hearing from you!

Richard Firsten is an ESL instructor, teacher trainer and author specializing in grammar and methodology. He currently teaches at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center in Miami, Florida. Reach him at ESLGrammarGuy@aol.com.

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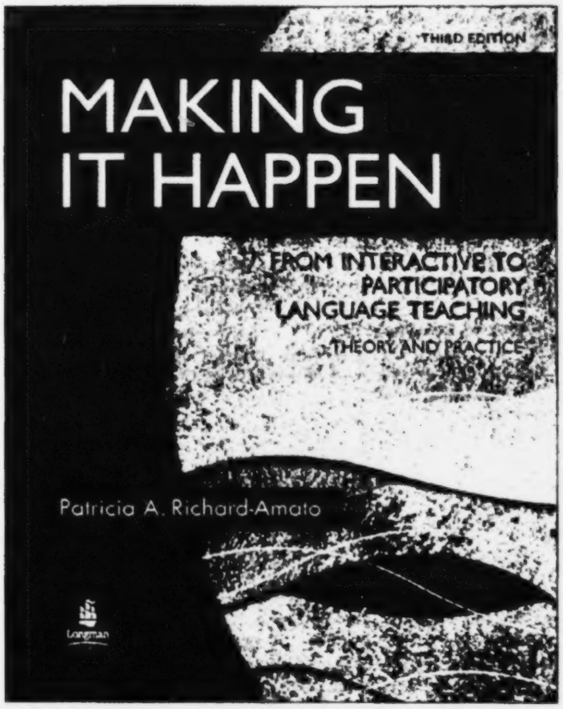
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> "**Making it Happen** *is a complete text with a great balance between theory and practice, and a wonderful and useful presentation of all the issues a teacher in training needs to be aware of. I would recommend its use for any training course as its sole text...I find it very complete."*
>
> *–Alejandra Parra, Nova Southeastern University*

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Comprehensive Insights for ESL Teachers

BY MONA SCHERAGA

Making It Happen: From Interactive to Participatory Language Teaching Theory and Practice, Third Edition
Patricia A. Richard-Amato, Longman, 2003

There may be a more comprehensive body of work for teachers and future teachers of other languages to learn from, but I can't imagine where. *Making It Happen* starts with a summary of the history of "foreign" language teaching theories and methodologies and goes through sample lesson plans, classroom layouts, the pros and cons of various methods, and insights from those in the field. The author is obviously aware of her target audience, practitioners and future practioners, and her own experience is evidenced by her focus on the most successful ways to "make it happen." A section that has particular impact includes case studies from teachers and students involved at different grade levels from elementary school through college.

In her introduction, Richard-Amato talks about the inevitability of change and the pitfall of dichotomous thinking where every controversy becomes an either/or situation. The new edition of *Making It Happen* is based on the premise that teachers are pragmatic beings. "In their efforts to be effective in classrooms, they will pick and choose whatever strategies are needed at the moment, depending upon the situation and the participants involved—their histories, their preferred modes of learning, their personal, social, and political concerns, and their immediate as well as long–term goals" (p. 2). As a teacher and teacher trainer, I was hooked!

Teachers now have an active role in shaping their teaching. Richard-Amato talks about the importance of history, the contributions of applied linguists, socioculturalists, cognitive theorists and researchers as essential to building one's own principles of second language teaching. Her interactive conceptualization of second language teaching includes three basic components: the affective base, the disciplinary knowledge base, and the experience/research base, with a myriad of other factors building on those three. It was a joy to read, "Another feature is that the conceptualization is independent of any specific method or methodology" (p. 6).

Making It Happen stresses the value of participatory education—of examining, reflecting, collaborating with supervisors, constantly evaluating what works, what doesn't, and why. It reminds us to welcome with open arms non-native speakers into teacher-education programs and stresses their value as role-models for students learning another language.

From the first page of the first chapter, Richard-Amato engages the reader, asking questions to stimulate reflection and discussion, to help the reader process background knowledge and to evaluate his/her own attitudes toward language learning/teaching techniques. For the novice, this is a concise introduction to the historical development of language learning theories. For those who have lived and taught through many of these cycles, it is a reminder of where we've been, how far we've gotten, and where we still have to tread. The questions at the end of the chapters provoke analysis and reflection and create a reader who is an active participant, whose opinions and experiences are central to the themes of each section. Charts, tables and sample lesson plans enhance the readings.

The book is divided into six parts. Part I: Theoretical Considerations: Developing Your Own Language Teaching Principles, includes these chapters: "From Grammatical to Communicative Methods," "The Classroom as an Environment for Language Acquisition," "The Role of Interaction, Participatory Language Teaching," "Literacy Development and Skills Integration," "The Affective Domain," and the inevitable Scarlet A—"Language Assessment and Standards."

Part II: Exploring Methods and Activities: What Can We Learn? examines several methods and activities compatible with interactional/participatory teaching including Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, chants, music, poetry, storytelling, role play and games. It also addresses ways to promote literacy development. It probes the history of affective activities and as with every other chapter in Parts I through III, it begins with "Questions to Think About" and ends with a summary of the chapter and readings, reflection and discussion.

Part III: The pragmatic, immediately useful aspects of *Making It Happen* are evidenced in particular in Putting It All Together: Some Practical Issues, which includes considerations for developing and implementing programs: the plan, the tools, program design, and political implications.

Part IV: Programs in Action is an opportunity to read about how other teachers have implemented and developed activities and methodologies according to the needs of their particular programs and students.

Part V: Related Readings by Alastair Pennycook and Sonia Nieto reminds us that there is more than language learning/teaching going on in the foreign language learning classroom. "Revelations on Being Black and Multicultural," "Confronting One's Identity," and other essays on "the personal and collective transformation of teachers" are riveting.

In Part VI, case studies are presented for reflection and discussion. Students get to read case studies from different grade levels, to discuss what they would do in each case and to read what the actual practitioners did. "My Good Year Explodes: A Confrontation With Parents" at the elementary level, and "Please, Not Another ESL Student" for middle school teachers are stories that any teacher can relate to, along with conflict resolution at the high school level and suddenly being thrust into a multicultural situation at the college level. I read Part VI first!

Each part can be used independently. For example, a teacher in need of immediate help can turn to Part II for on-the-spot lesson plan ideas. After each part of *Making It Happen*, I thought, "This is my favorite." It's a true self-help book.

Mona Scheraga is a teacher, teacher trainer and author in the fields of ESL and EFL.

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Cryptograms in the ESL/EFL Classroom

BY LEE OAKES AND MARILYN ROSENTHAL, PH.D.

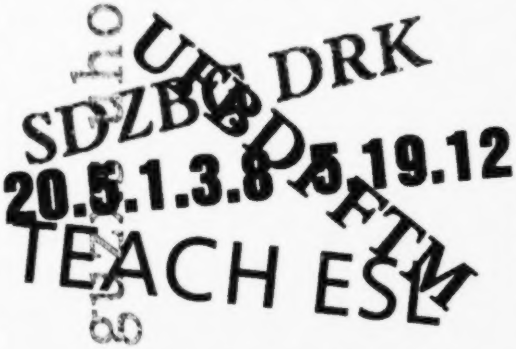
Cryptogram, *criptograma, cryptogramme, crittogramma, lamigluwka, padaranga, kripta, kriptograma*! Known, loved and played worldwide, cryptograms are word puzzles with roots in many languages and cultures. Remember being a kid with a secret to share with your buddies using a code based on the alphabet? In our memories and probably yours, the very best secret languages were scrambled alphabet puzzles that could only be solved by breaking a code that was hidden in a magic ring or board, usually found in a cereal box or a box of Cracker Jacks.® These puzzles were fun because they provided a real sense of accomplishment when the words were unscrambled and the mystery was solved. Maybe we didn't know this, but we were solving cryptograms. (By the way, those words above are in these languages: English, Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, Kannada—an indigenous language of India, Slovak and Latvian.)

Cryptograms may seem like simple fun, an end in themselves without a larger purpose, yet they can be effective learning tools in the hands of thoughtful ESL/EFL professionals. Regardless of age or prior language preparation, students can use cryptograms to reinforce newly acquired language skills and transfer a familiar pastime to a new language and culture.

What are Cryptograms?

Cryptograms are word puzzles that rely on a simple system of substituting one letter for another in a pre-determined pattern so that a word, phrase or sentence becomes a puzzle. Every cryptogram has its own logic, but there are common threads that run through all of them. Any letter may be substituted for any other letter, but once chosen, it must continue to be used as the code letter stand-in for the remainder of that cryptogram. Sometimes the numbers 1-26 are substituted for letters. Even more occasionally, abstract symbols are used to represent alphabet letters.

Let's look at an example of a cryptogram using the word *cryptogram* itself. In this example, each letter is represented by the one after it in the alphabet. A is B, B is C, C is D, etc.: *cryptogram* becomes *dszuphsbn*. This is a good example of a hard puzzle word because only one letter is repeated and most of the other letters are not among the most frequently used in English. This means you won't find many puzzle-solving hints for this word imbedded in other words in the puzzle. In the "Sample Puzzles" sidebar below, there are two more examples for building a simple cryptogram, using only the twelve most commonly used letters in English. As you look at the repetition of letters, you can see how much easier it is to solve these.



Solving Cryptograms

One of our favorite cryptogram-creators is Louise B. Moll, whose work is published in English and can be found in bookstores everywhere. In her book *Cryptogram-a-Day* she offers some thoughtful guidelines for solving cryptograms. They would be helpful to any cryptogram solver, but especially to anyone who wants to bring this interesting and instructive pastime into the ESL/EFL classroom. So, with great appreciation to Ms. Moll for compiling these, here are some characteristics of English that can be helpful in solving cryptograms:

- The order of frequency of the most used letters in English is E-T-A-O-I-N-S-H-R-D-L and U, a total of twelve letters.
- The five most common three-letter words include *the, and, but, for* and *are*.
- The five most common two-letter words are *it, is, of, in* and *to*.
- Long word endings include *-ing, -ion, -est, -ied* and *-ally*.

Here is more helpful information, gleaned from our own experience:

- In addition to the five two-letter words cited by Moll, there are fifteen more that are useful to remember: *am, an, as, at, be, by, do, go, he, if, me, my, no, so, we*.
- Short words are often builder words. They can be found at the end of longer words or imbedded in them: for example, *legion, magician, honor, many* or *human*.
- *He* and *the* are examples of short words that often help to make longer ones: for example, *they, them, then, there, here*. There are many more.
- Three-letter endings are common. Be on the lookout for them.
- Very few commonly used words end in *i* in English.
- Twelve frequently used double letters are *cc, dd, ee, ff, ii, mm, nn, oo, pp, ss, tt* and *zz*.

And now for five problem-solving strategies to remember when adding cryptograms to your professional toolbox: 1) look at the puzzle in its entirety.

Sample Puzzles

Pattern 1:	Each letter is represented by the one *after* it in the alphabet. A is B, B is C, C is D, etc. Z defaults to A.
Cryptogram:	Mfbso usvtu boe tibsf FTM svmft.
Solution:	Learn, trust, and share ESL rules.
Pattern 2:	Each letter is represented by the letter *before* it in the alphabet. A defaults to Z, B is A, C is B, etc.
Cryptogram:	Kdzqm sqtrs zmc rgzqd DRK qtkdr.
Solution:	Learn, trust, and share ESL rules.

See it as a language picture. 2) Are there a lot of long words? Are they repeated? Is there a rhythm to the repetition? 3) Are there any single letter words? Think A or I. These are starters in other words. 4) Are there apostrophe words? These are often end in *t, s, ll, re*. They are all among the most commonly used letters in English. 5) Do any of the longer words include the same letters as any two- or three-letter words?

Now that you have all the hints and strategies you need, decode the sentence in the "Now You Try It" sidebar below and figure out the code pattern being used. Remember the strategies. Look for repeated letters, little words, etc. Write the sentence in the second row of boxes and write the code pattern.

Cryptograms in the ESL/EFL Classroom

Since solving cryptograms is essentially decoding, what a perfect fit these puzzles are for the ESL/EFL classroom where the language learning process is primarily one of decoding and secondarily one of interpreting.

While the cryptograms generally found in cryptogram books are intellectually stimulating and fun, most of them are a bit too difficult for ESL/EFL students. However, you can create your own cryptograms at various language levels for practice and reinforcement as well as fun in the ESL/EFL classroom.

In creating your own cryptograms and having your students solve them, all the same rules and strategies mentioned above will still apply. The difference would be that the cryptograms you create would be on an easier language level or could help teach culture without being culture bound. We recommend simple sentences for the beginning level students, compound sentences with a lot of prepositional phrases for the intermediate levels, and complex sentences perhaps with adverbial clauses for advanced level students.

ESL Magazine's Online Poll

Do you use word puzzles (crosswords, cryptograms, etc.) in teaching ESL/EFL?

29%	Often
59%	Sometimes
12%	Never

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You can use cryptograms in many ways:

- To reinforce various syntactic patterns (simple subject + verb + object (SVO) sentences, prepositional phrases, adjective clauses, adverbial clauses)
- To reinforce various word classes (nouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives)
- To reinforce phonics patterns (consonantal shapes) in American English such as the high frequency consonant + vowel + consonant (CVC) pattern (*man, can, ton, tin*), initial consonant clusters (*tr, st, str, th, gr*) and final consonant clusters (*ts, st,rd, nt*). These patterns are idiosyncratic to English and reinforcing them as part of a cryptogram would add an element of fun.
- To introduce cultural patterns with simple proverbs or idioms in American English
- To introduce quotes, jokes, and simple poems.

Create your own code using the code box below; then give your students encoded messages using a message box like the one illustrated below.

Student-Created Cryptograms

Why should teachers have all the fun? We suggest having students write their own codes and messages. Give each student a code box to create his or her own code with letters, numbers or symbols to represent each letter. A code using letters could follow the "before" pattern, the "after" pattern, or any other pattern (e.g., "flip-flopping" the alphabet). Any letter can substitute for any for any other letter, as long as the substitution is consistent within the puzzle.

After students have created their own codes, give each student a page with three blank message boxes. Have each student write three simple encoded sentences in the top row of boxes. Students can then exchange papers and decode their classmates' cryptograms, writing the message in the bottom row of boxes.

Teacher-made or student-made cryptograms can be a fun, challenging, change-of-pace activity. Your students will love it, and it will be great grist for discussion about the differences in language and culture with regard to cryptograms in students' native languages. Try it and let us know how it works. In the meantime, remember—Dszuphsbnr bsf dppm! (Cryptograms are cool!)

Lee Oakes is a freelance writer and an avid fan of cryptograms. Marilyn Rosenthal is editorial director of ESL Magazine.

References

Moll, Louise B. 1996. *A Cryptogram-a-Day*. New York, NY: Sterling Publishing Company, Inc.

Now You Try It

Decode the message and write it in the bottom row of boxes. What is the code pattern—Pattern 1 or 2? ____________________

H		K	N	U	D		Z	K	K		L	X		R	S	T	C	D	M	S	R

Code Box

You and your students can use a code box like this one to create a code.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Message Box

You and your students can use a message box like this one. The encoded message is written in the top row of boxes and the decoded message is written in the bottom row.

Greg Kessler's

Technology

Reduce, Reuse, Recompute!

One issue associated with technology use these days is the potential for waste. Computer equipment is finding its way into landfills at an alarming rate as we strive for continued improvements in speed and power. Of course, this issue divides us into the "haves" and "have-nots." Some readers may contribute annually to the great landfill of plastic, glass and toxic cathode ray tubes; others may be using equipment for a decade, wishing for something new. Connecting these two groups is one way to reduce waste.

Donate—Don't Throw Away. If you are among the "haves," you should celebrate and share. You may think your two-year-old CPU is outdated and of no use to anyone, but others might greatly appreciate such equipment. Such donations regularly go to nongovernmental organizations around the globe, but there are organizations that redistribute equipment to groups in the U.S., too. This applies to printers, scanners, monitors, cables, keyboards—just about any device you may consider discarding. Some job-training programs even incorporate the refurbishing of this equipment.

Sometimes it is Better to Receive. There are a variety of organizations that cater to the needs of educators who lack appropriate technology. Many federal and state programs also provide services that distribute computer equipment to public schools through these means as well as through grants and awards. If you can't find what you need through donations, you may want to consider purchasing used equipment as a way of lessening the environmental burden and saving money.

Considerations. There are some basic guidelines that can assist you on either end of these transactions. When donating computers, erase the hard drive so that personal information is not available to future users. If you are accepting donated equipment, be certain that it is in good working order or that you'll have help making it so. Also, be certain that the equipment in question is appropriate for your needs. This includes determining what level of ongoing maintenance and repair certain items may need as well as what additional materials they may require.

Don't go overboard in accepting donations. I volunteer for a non-profit organization that has accepted dozens of inkjet printers of many makes and models. Ink for inkjets is expensive and cartridges are not interchangeable. This group wasted lots of money on cartridges for printers that stopped working or were phased out for more recent donations. I found a donated laser printer (which operates on cheaper toner and is shared by everyone in the office), and now one appropriate piece of equipment serves them better than many inappropriate ones had.

Visit http://gregling.net/donate for resources related to donating, applying for donations and purchasing used computer equipment.

Greg Kessler teaches in the Ohio Program of Intensive English (OPIE) at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He manages OPIE's use of a self-access computer lab and develops distance programs. He is currently chair of TESOL CALL Interest Section.

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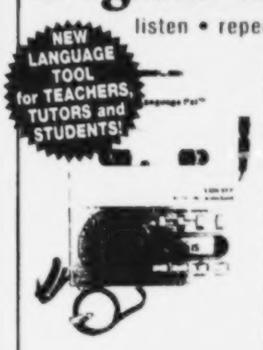

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CONGENIAL CLASSROOMS

BY KIRSTEN SCHAETZEL

During my first ESL teaching job after receiving my MATESL degree, I had an experience that changed the way I look at teaching and learning. A student walked out of my class after arguing with another student about the roles of women, our class discussion topic. Despite my experience and education, nothing had taught me how to manage cultural differences in the classroom. I knew then that I did not want to teach any more classes in which a student stormed out. So, in the twenty years since that class, I have consciously tried to create a classroom climate that not only tolerates diversity, but encourages students to acknowledge that there is more than one way of looking at an issue.

Cultural Community

Margaret Coffey defines a cultural community as one which fosters "meaningful communication among all group members when they do not share a common worldview" (1999, 26). So the aim in creating a congenial classroom environment is to have students from differing worldviews engage in meaningful communication. To do this, students must move through the "inclusion" stage of group development. The inclusion stage "revolves around ideas of self presentation, building trust, and building a feeling of safety within the group" (Shaw 1992, 3). Many students in our ESL/EFL classes come from educational systems with very competitive classroom environments in which the ideas and opinions of students are seldom voiced; thus, students entering our ESL/EFL classes from competitive classes need an orientation to a different kind of class environment. They need to understand that in our classrooms diversity is valued, and all opinions and ideas are shared freely.

As teachers, we can control aspects of our classrooms so that we have a congenial environment and help students learn to appreciate and enjoy difference. We can set up a good classroom environment, introduce group work and manage it so that it is a positive learning experience, and we can understand and manage our own biases.

Developing a Classroom Environment

Good classroom environments for learning rarely just happen. They are set up through the strategies and philosophies of teachers. The most important philosophy for promoting a good classroom environment is that diversity is good. This may seem basic; however, often teachers see diversity as a "problem" or a "wrinkle" in their classroom plans. For example, teachers in an Australian project with adult migrant English service classes saw disparate groups as "problematic" and "difficult to teach" (Burns 1997, 7). Though all of us as teachers would say that we value diversity, when we have extremely diverse groups, we often look upon them as more difficult to teach, whether differences are in skill level, nationality, personality, age or other factors. If we want students to value diversity, we ourselves must value it and communicate that to our students.

I have found that I need to communicate this overtly. I cannot depend on students to see this through my attitudes, actions and reactions. There are two ways that we can clearly communicate that we value diversity: through class policies and rules, and through discussions of slogans and quotations that promote the diversity of opinions.

At the beginning of the term or school year, it is important to formulate class rules that allow all students to speak and give all students the responsibility of listening to others' opinions. I have found that making class rules and policies works best if they come from the students themselves. This discussion can begin by asking students to decide the three most important things they can do to have clear, smooth communication with others. They can discuss this in pairs or groups, and then ideas can be shared with the whole class and a short list of class rules and policies can be determined. I have found it best to keep this list short, three to five items, so that it is easy for students and the teacher to remember. Then, when students do not follow the policies, they can be referred back to their own policy.

In addition to this, having one or several discussions about quotations and slogans that promote the coexistence of diverse opinions is also helpful. I have used the following three slogans to spark discussions on the value of people's differing opinions and there are many others: "Each person is entitled to his/her opinion"; "We agree to disagree"; "If two people agree on everything, one of them is not necessary."

Discussing these slogans at the beginning of the term not only communicates to students that diversity of opinion will exist in this class, but that diversity is expected. It's the norm rather than something unusual. These slogans, combined with clear classroom rules, give students the guidelines they need to express their opinions and ideas and to participate in a class that values diversity.

In addition to communicating to students that diversity is good, it is also important that a teacher know his students well and that the students know each other well. People do not voice opinions readily if they do not know their audience, and knowing their audience helps people modify the phrasing of opinions so that people can agree to disagree.

I use the following activity at the beginning of a course as a way for students to get to know one another well. Instead of having students introduce themselves or one other person to the class, I devote one class period to students getting to know one another by having them fill out a grid, gathering the following information from each classmate: name, email address, telephone number, and answers to questions such as "What you like about…?" and "What you do *not* like about…?" This activity can be adapted to the locale in which it is done. I usually have students express what they like and don't like about the city or country we are in, or about food, hobbies, etc. This gives students their first opportunity to express an opinion to one of their classmates. It also allows every student to meet every other student in the class and ensures that they make eye contact. Eye contact is the basis of the "posture" for discussion and the exchange of ideas: "Eye contact, an important channel of interpersonal communication, helps regulate the flow of communication" (Ritts and Stein 2002, 1). This activity also allows the teacher to talk to all the students individually. Though this exercise usually takes an entire class period, the classes in which I have done it have a much better environment for participatory activities.

This exercise has two additional benefits for teachers: a teacher can quickly assess students' oral abilities in English and can find out which students have particular abilities in which areas. These students can be "class experts" on certain topics. At the beginning of one term, I discovered through this exercise that a student had studied the Latin and Greek roots of English. So, when we did vocabulary development, he was often consulted about what the root of a new word might mean.

Another way to help students get to know each other sooner rather than later is to have a class party at the beginning of a term rather than at the end (Wilhelm 1999).

Managing Group Work

Another way to build cultural community is "to include ample assignments that foster cooperation," i.e, group work (Coffey 1999, 28). However, many students, especially those coming from competitive classrooms, see group work as a waste of time and the result of a teacher's laziness. In their research in mainland China and the U.K., Jin and Cortazzi discovered that Chinese students felt that discussion was "'fruitless': they thought it wasted time; they risked learning errors from their peers" (1998, 105-106).

Because students come to our classes from many different educational backgrounds, it is important that we explain the value of group work and other educational experiences that may be new to them. I have seen many reluctant groups of students decide at the end of a discussion or a group project that they actually have learned a great deal. When assigning a group activity, we especially need to communicate the following to students :

1. Clear Objectives: Why are we doing this activity? What can students learn from it? How might this activity help them in their language development? Does this activity in any way mimic a real life experience they might encounter?

2. Clear Goals: What do we expect groups to be able to do at the end of the activity? Will group members need to present something? Will group members need to write something?

3. Roles for Students: What is each individual student expected to do in the group? When working with students who have never worked as part of a group before, it is often helpful for the teacher to list roles for individual students: a recorder, a presenter, a time manager, a discussion facilitator (who talks and for how long). A teacher can list the responsibilities for each of these roles the first time they are given to students.

4. Time Management: How long will students work on this project or how long should this discussion be? What are students expected to accomplish during class time? What might they need to do at home?

If we can give students the parameters for group work and the reasons why we are asking them to engage in it, they are more likely to participate in it willingly and to gain that which we had hoped from it. By clarifying our goals and objectives to students, we help them understand the potential of group work for learning. Furthermore, when students know what is required of them, it is much easier for them to work together. When they know what they have to do, why they have to do it, how long they have to accomplish it and who is responsible for what, the foundations of cooperation have been laid.

Managing Teacher Biases in the Classroom

"Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher (Palmer 1998, 10). Palmer defines identity as the "intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life" and integrity as "relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death" (1998, 13). When we work with a diverse class and invite students to air diverse ideas and opinions, our reactions to what students say and how they say it allow students to glimpse our identity and judge our integrity in a way that vocabulary and grammar exercises never do. How do we respond to student opinions that are vastly different from, and sometimes contrary to, our own? How we as teachers react or do not react to what students say will determine the extent to which our classrooms are truly congenial environments for learning.

To allow students to see our identity and determine the integrity of our reactions to certain opinions and ideas, we first need to know our own identity and be comfortable with ourselves. This will often involve acknowledging our own biases, likes and dislikes. In addition to this, we must be "models" of listening to diverse ideas and being open to ideas that are very different from our own. If we listen with a false attitude of openness, students will know and our integrity will be compromised. So, if we want to encourage students to value diversity and "try on" different ideas and opinions, we, too, must be willing to do so.

We need to adopt the attitude toward difference that Emily Perl Kingsley (1987) describes in coming to terms with having a child with Down's Syndrome—it's like planning a trip to Italy but having to go to Holland. It's not a bad place, just a different place, and "*if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things...about Holland.*"

Ms. Kingsley can see the goodness of difference in life with a child who has special needs. We, as teachers, need to be able to see difference as something good and valuable as we allow students to speak and participate in our classrooms. A discussion might not end the way we would have it; the reporting out from groups might include ideas that we find "unenlightened"; or a group presentation might not cover an "extremely important aspect" of a topic. How will we react to these situations and what will students see and perceive of our commitment to diversity through our reactions?

When we teach in congenial environments, valuing the diversity of opinions and ideas, we, ourselves, are constantly experimenting with new thoughts. And, as Palmer says, "Experimentation is risky... but if we want to deepen our understanding of our own integrity, experiment we must— and then be willing to make choices as we view the experimental results" (1998, 16). We must be willing to allow students to see us as we really are and allow them to be who they really are.

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Writing Effective Cover Letters

BY TOM RIEDMILLER

We all understand the importance of first impressions in a job search. A poorly written and unattractive cover letter can create a bad impression about you, your skills and the way you work. A good cover letter is like an essay with an introduction, body and conclusion.

Introduction. Establish a context and your thesis. Establish a context by telling the reader how you found out about the opening. Drop a name here, too—e.g.,"Dr. Irma Sawtoothe in the English department suggested I write to you …." Your thesis should be at the end of the introduction and should be your most powerful sentence, telling how qualified you are and how you're a perfect match for the position. This sentence also controls what you discuss later in your letter: "*With my certification in Spanish and seven years of teaching ESL, you will find me well suited for the position you advertised in Sunday's New Pfaltz Times-Herald.*"

Body. The body of the letter is ideally one paragraph—short and sweet. Elaborate on how your education, experiences and achievements you summarized in the first paragraph relate to what the employer wants. This is how I started one paragraph in response to an advertisement that was very specific. Can you see what the ad was looking for? "*As you can see on my CV, I have the practical and educational qualifications you are seeking. My qualifications include a master's degree in TESOL and seven years working in ESL and English for academic purposes programs at the university level. Moreover, spending many years as an educator working in a variety of international environments has provided me with keen sensitivity to the needs of people of all backgrounds...*"

Conclusion. When I read student essays in my writing classes, the conclusion is the point where even the best students get sloppy. They are so relieved to finish the introduction and the body that they end it all by simply dashing off a conclusion. Don't let a pithy "Thank You" or "Sincerely" bring a lovely letter to a horrible end. Paraphrase your assets (in this letter, education and experience) and then include the customary closing words: "*I have enclosed a résumé, which outlines my education and experience in more detail. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you on how I can become a productive part of the team at Prince Albert High School*" (Adapted from Yate 1998, 104 and 108).

Finally, here are some dos and don'ts to save your cover letter from the "circular file."

DOs

- ✓ Select Times Roman 12 as your font for the sake of convention and readability.
- ✓ Send a letter to a person, not a "Dear Director." Do anything to get a name.
- ✓ Write in a business letter format—see my website for some links to Microsoft for dozens of examples.
- ✓ Use the spell checker. There is no excuse for *bad speling* and *terribl grammer.*
- ✓ Use active verbs and avoid passive voice when possible.
- ✓ Explore good career websites for hints.
- ✓ Check out *Cover Letters That Knock 'Em Dead* by Martin Yate. See sources below.

DON'Ts

- ✗ Don't include personal information such as age, weight, health, religion and marital status. It's none of their business.
- ✗ Don't use your employer's email, computers and equipment for your cover letters (or résumé) unless you have permission.
- ✗ Don't drop names if you don't have permission.
- ✗ Don't use cheap paper or ink jet printers. Use laser printers and résumé bond papers from your office supply store.
- ✗ Don't email your letter unless specifically requested to do so. Some folks out there still don't know how to use email.

My website (http://fp.uni.edu/riedmill/jobpage) is still open for you to share your website finds. You can also share your dos and don'ts. You will also find links to great examples of cover letters and templates that do all the fancy formatting for you. I welcome your input, so leave your comments on the website.

RESOURCES

Yate, M. 2002. *Knock 'Em Dead 2003*. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation ISBN: 1580627595

Yate, M. 1998. *Cover Letters that Knock 'Em Dead*. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation.

Tom Riedmiller teaches in the Culture and Intensive English Program at the University of Northern Iowa. You can reach him via his webpage http://fp.uni.edu/riedmill.

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